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THE DRUMMING, THE LEGACY
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JOE FRANCO
40 YEARS OF DOUBLE BASS DRUMMING

DARU JONES
THE DARU SESSIONS PART 2

LEARN FROM:
CARMINE APPICE ▪ PETER ERSKINE
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SEPTEMBER 2022

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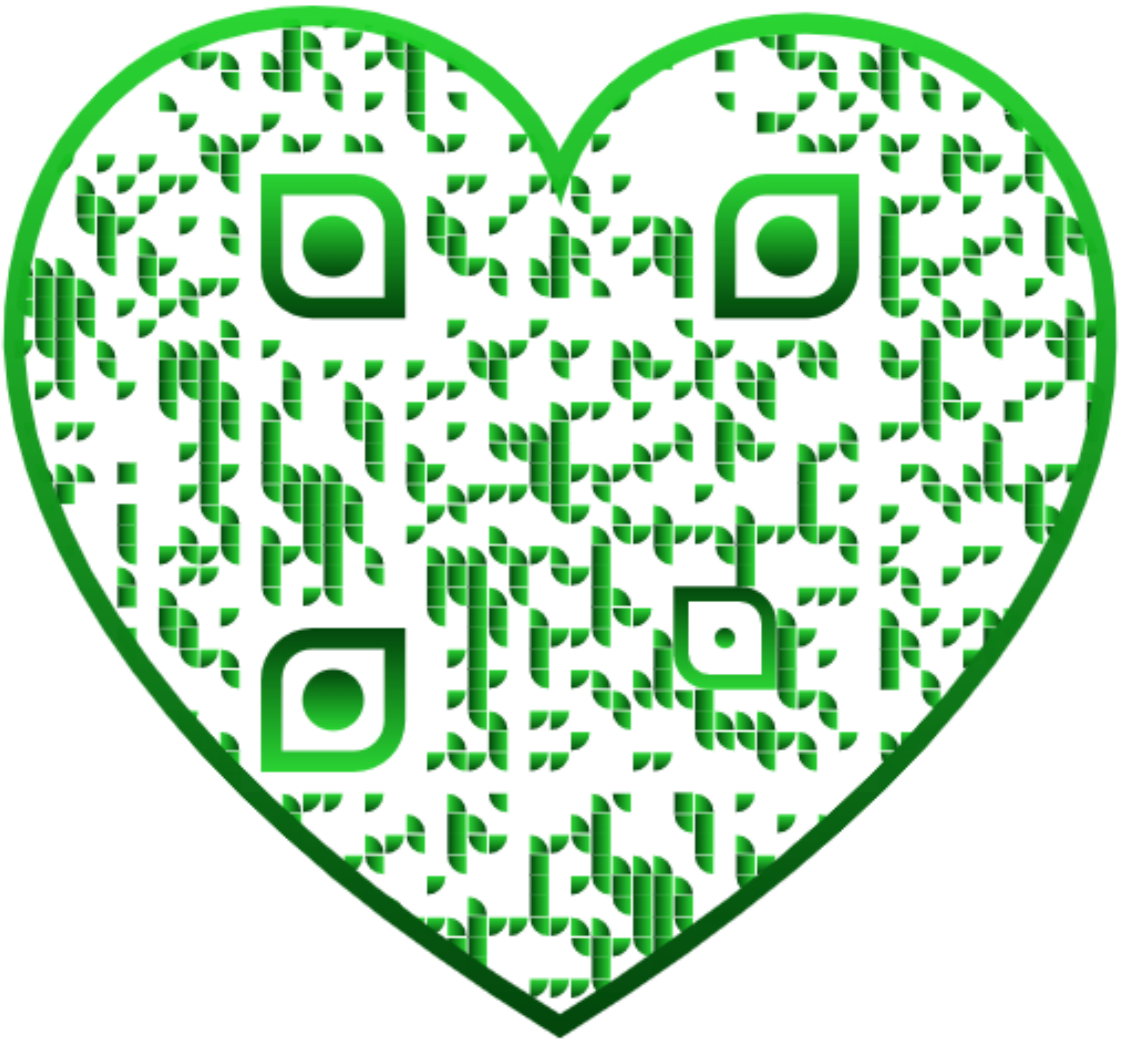

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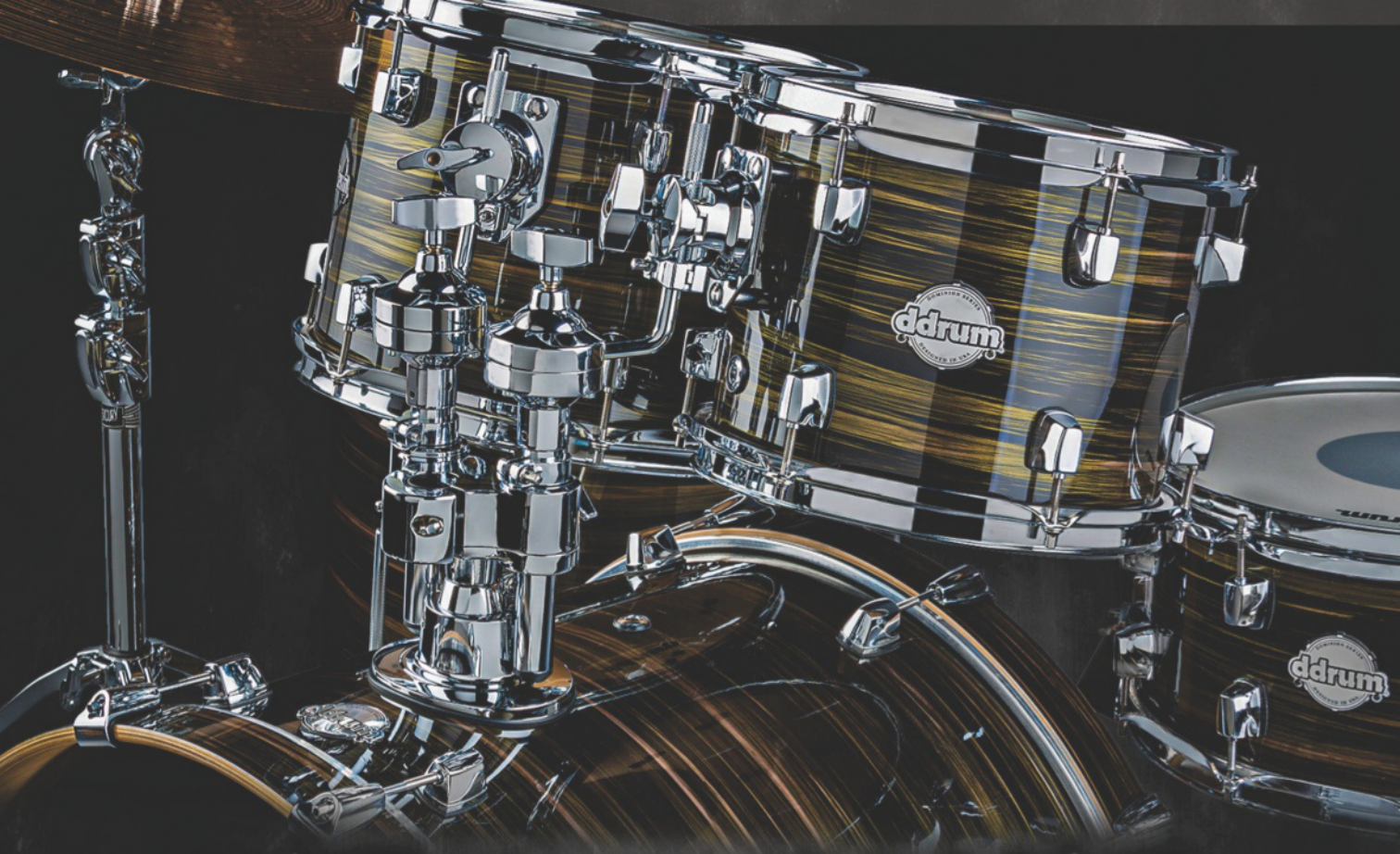

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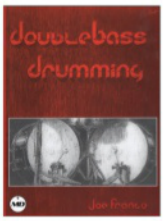

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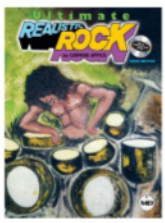

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AN EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

Drumming Surprises!

I must admit I often get surprised by interviewing certain drummers. This month I had the pleasure to interview double bass drum groundbreaker Joe Franco, Megadeth's Dirk Verbeuren, and Drumology's Rob Silverman

I have taught from Joe Franco's amazing book for years and remember seeing his drum videos in the 90s and clinics in the 80s. But I had no idea what he had been doing for the last 30 years or so. I wondered if he had become one of the many drummers who became disenchanted with the music business and took their hard-working approach elsewhere. *NOPE*! Joe Franco is having an under the radar and successful drumming career that many of us would kill for. And to say it is a well-rounded career would be the understatement of the century.

When I interviewed Megadeth's Dirk Verbeuren, I was equally surprised. I must admit that I am not the biggest speed or thrash metal fan around. But Dirk is about so much more than that! We wound up talking about the history of the great drummers of Megadeth, R&B and rap music of the 80s, how he learned Megadeth's music for the gig, his drum sound, and how he went about creating drum parts for the new Megadeth record *The Sick, The Dying… And The Dead.* HE even brought up the fact that had been practicing some jazz drumming concepts (of all things.)

Rob Silverman shared some surprises that he learned while working with the world's greatest drummers on his *Drumology* recordings as well. You don't really "know" a person until you have worked with them, and Rob has worked with, and learned from them ALL!

I was really pleasantly surprised by all of these talented and fascinating drummers. They had so much to share about music, the music business, and the drumming world. Keep your eyes and ears open, you'll never know what and who will initiate that next piece of musical, drum, and life inspiration.

Mark Griffith
Content Director

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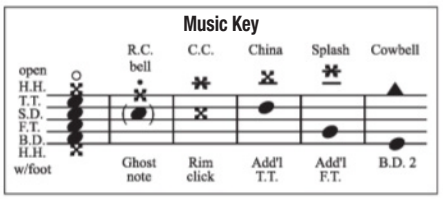

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Corey's Kit

This month's **Kit of the Month** comes from Canada's **Corey Chernesky.** His impressive **Tama SuperStar Birch Kit** features a 7x8 Rack Tom, 8x10 Rack Tom, 9x12 Rack Tom, 12x14 Floor Tom, 14x16 Floor Tom, and 18x22 Kick Drums. His backbeats are played on a 6.5x14 Black Nickle Snare Drum. His drums are equipped with **Remo Heads** (Clear Emperors/Toms Coated PowerStroke/ Snare Drums.) His **Zildjian cymbals** are 14" Dyno Beat Hi-hats, 14" Quick Beat Hi-hats, 17" A Custom Crash, 18" A Custom Crash, 19" A Custom Crash, 20" A Custom Crash, 20" Earth Ride, 18" A Custom China, and a 19" Z3 China. His accessories, hardware, and electronics feature: Iron Cobra Kick Drum Pedals, **Audix** Microphones, **FootBlaster** Triggers, **Alesis** DM5 Module, **Focusrite** Scarlett 18i20 Interface, **Plunge Audio** In Ear Monitors, and a **GoPro** Hero 5.

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ROB SILVERMAN: DRUMOLOGY II

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Back to School

By Peter Erskine

"School days, school days
Dear old golden rule days
Readin' and drummin' and 'rithmetic
Taught to the tune of a signature stick …"

Most of you may not be old enough to remember the tune, and my apologies for changing a couple of the words, but hey … that's what (this) jazz (drumming column) is all about.

In any event, it's that time of year again when we dust off our practice pads and get ready for the new school year. If you're studying in college or high school, the following warm-ups will serve you well. And if you're not currently in school, then you're probably like me: still learning, still a student of the instrument, and always happy to come across a challenge that will help make me a better player.

1974, teaching at a high school with the Stan Kenton Orchestra

Me teaching at the Drummers Collective, with Warren Bernhardt and Eddie Gomez, early 1980s

As with all WARM-UPS, the goal is to slowly build up our speed and volume as well as dexterity. That means to take these SLOW. These are, for the most part, fairly basic beats and counter-rhythms to play. Part of the fun should be investigating how well you can play these while maintaining a good tone on the drumset AND keep a swinging (dancing, buoyant) feel going. (To quote another song, *"It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing."*)

1968, first day of school at the Interlochen Arts Academy (my dad took the photo)

A few comments ahead of time:

1. Be mindful of tempo
2. Be mindful of volume
3. Be mindful of which note is played where (pay attention, don't take any triplet or 16th-note for granted the real trick with many of these will be playing the hi-hat RIGHT ON beats 2 + 4.
4. Most of these will have self-evident stickings, but please follow the sticking notations when provided.
5. It's okay to add accents if you like!
6. Exercise "C" has the bass drum in the middle of the triplet or 3-note phrase.
   a. Which drummers play their bass drum on the middle tuplet?
   b. Which drummers play the bass drum on the 3rd tuplet?
   c. Which drummers like to play the bass drum on the first (downbeat) tuplet?
7. Exercise "L" is for Lamond … Don Lamond. This is a beat I've heard him (and only him!) play as a jazz shuffle … it's an otherwise surfer beat that's almost too cool for school.

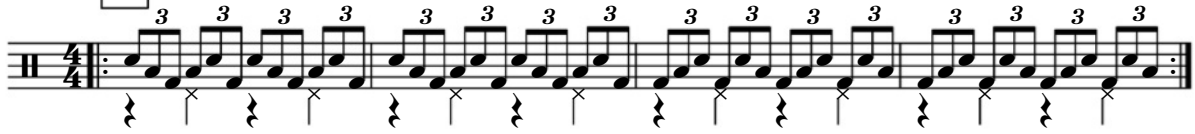
Back to it, gang!

Some years later, looking at some music in Capitol Studios, Hollywood

Age 6 The local music store in Pleasantville, New Jersey (a couple of towns over from where I grew up)

BACK TO SCHOOL WARM-UPS

A



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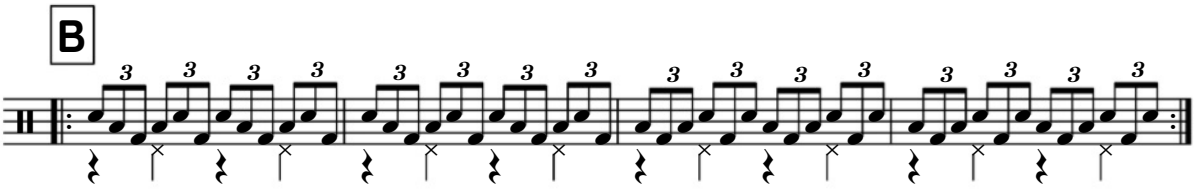

C

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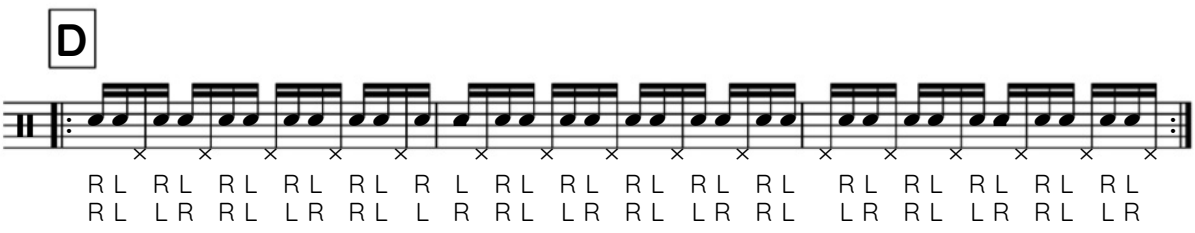
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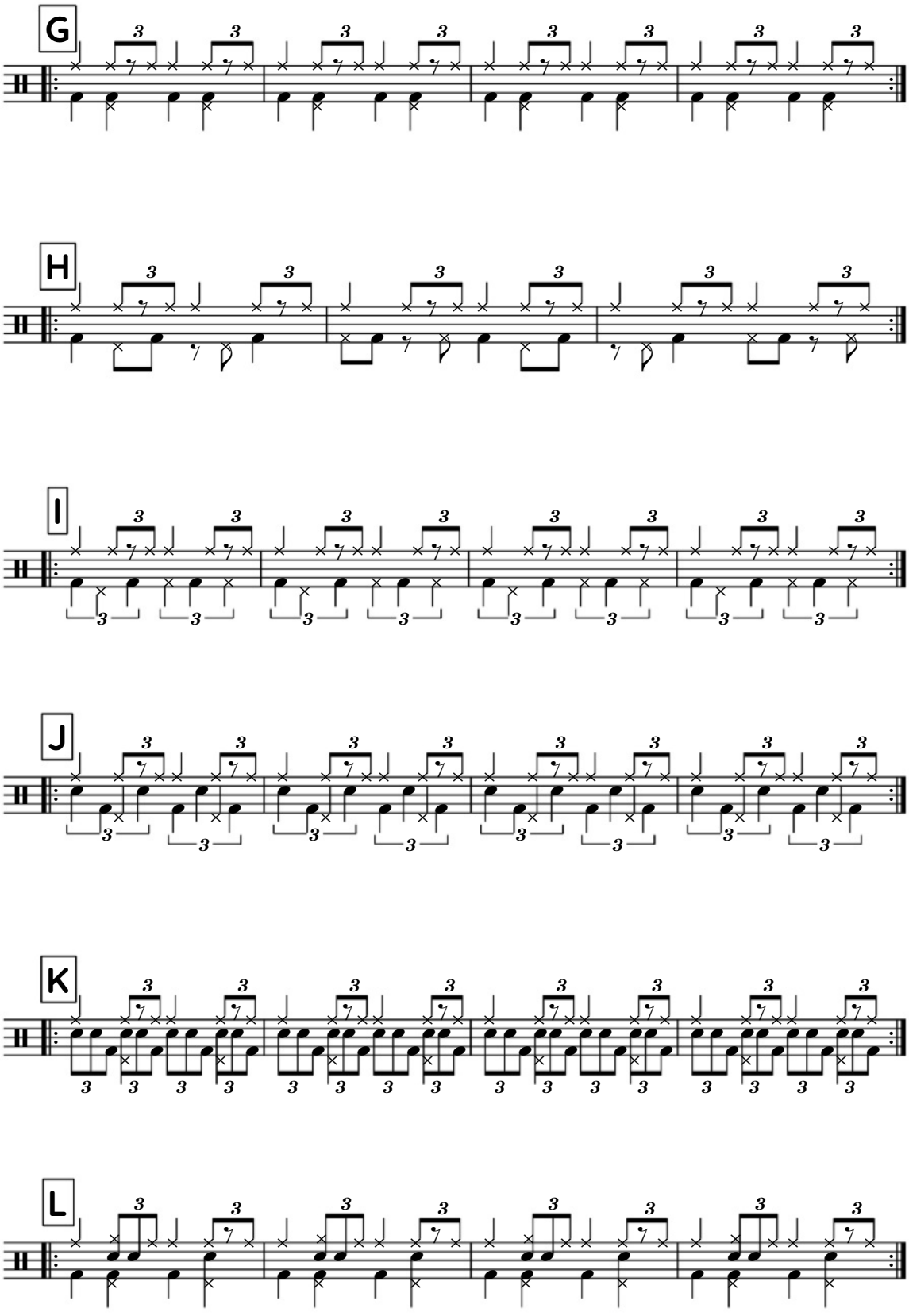

Check out Peter's drummer profile page, and get a copy of his Legends book at moderndrummer.com

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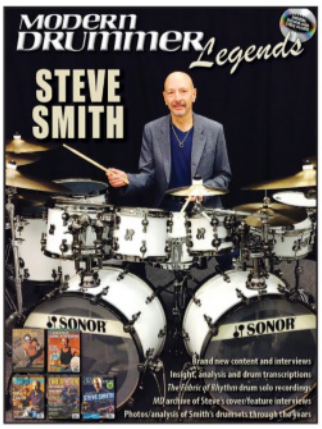

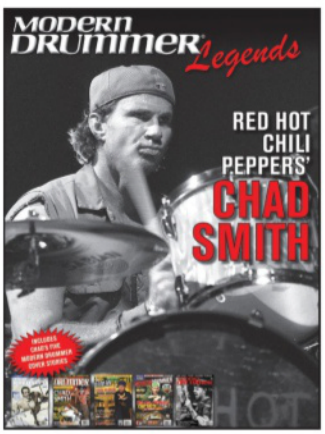

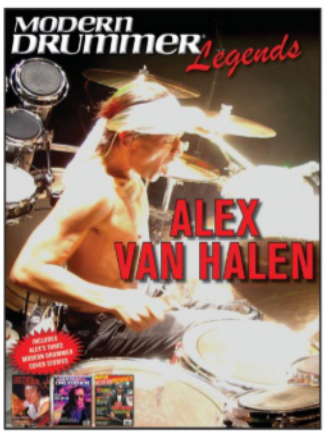

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THE 31ST ANNUAL CHICAGO DRUM SHOW

Story by Brian Hill and Bob Campbell

Photos by Bob Campbell

On May 21 & 22, 2022, the Chicago Drum Show hosted/produced by Rob Cook returned in full force to the Kane County Fair Grounds. Rob and his staff really outdid themselves again this year by continuing to produce the longest running and largest drum show. With over 160 vendors, the event offered literally something for everyone! The show attracted over 1400 attendees from many countries around the world making this a truly international event.

As always, this year's show boasted new and vintage drums, cymbals, hardware, percussion, industry swag, vintage advertisements, and rare parts and pieces, as well as some really special exhibits. You could literally spend both days here and still miss something very cool. For those of you who could not attend this year, here's a quick run-down of the show.

At the show's entrance was a central lobby area that separated the two large exhibit halls. In the lobby, an impressive WFL III Drums display, manned by Bill Ludwig III and his crew, commanded attention. Bill acted as the show's drum ambassador greeting everyone with a smile and a handshake. He was proud to state that, "WFL III drums are from drummers making drums for drummers." He noted that all of the wonderful WFL III kits in his booth were prototypes built especially for the show. According to Sib Weisbender (General Manager), WFL III Drums are made from their "G2" shells and use no wraps but only stained, painted, clear-or powder-coated finishes. Also on display was a cool prototype black nickel over brass snare drum with double lugs and 40-strand snare wires made for John Humphrey (Seether), a WFL III Drums artist. Sib mentioned that John wanted a snare drum with more girth and a stadium rock sound. These drums are now entering production.

Also in the Lobby was the On The Ropes museum exhibit (Brian Hill) with a cache of 17th & 18th Century drums and drumsticks as well as a Truss drum display. One eye-catching bass drum was emblazoned with a hand-painted eagle and red, white, and blue shield. This drum was recently restored and believed to be around 350 years old, making it one of the oldest American drums in existence. This drum was used in the 1840 presidential campaign of William Henry Harrison. The painting and conversion to a bass drum was done in the Federal period around 1800, and the drum may have seen service during the War of 1812. It is believed that the drum originates from the second half of the 17th century when it was used as a side drum. A truly amazing piece of drum history.

In addition to On The Ropes, there were other very impressive "display only" exhibits at the show that alone justified the price of admission. The Bloo Goose Percussion exhibit offered a pristine and complete Neil Peart "R-30" drum kit, #9 of only 30 made by DW, for

photo opportunities and even to play! The Mitch Mitchell Fan Club booth had several replica kits on display representing the different drum sets which Mitch played over the years with The Jimi Hendrix Experience.

Other drum companies at the show included A&F Drum, Baltimore Drum, Chicago Drums, Craviotto, Dunnett Custom/George Way, Holland Drums, Independent Drum Lab (Inde), Jenkins-Martin (displaying a custom fiberglass kit with Picasso's famous Guernica painting as the graphic), Joyful Noise (with the newly introduced Knight Hawk ferromanganese snare drum), Ludwig, Palmetto Drum, Rogers, Trick, and Woods Custom drums to name but a few. Notably, Ronn Dunnett recently acquired the intellectual property rights to Milestone percussion and is now starting production of these illustrious Canadian drums. Much like Ronn had successfully done with George Way Drums, Ronn aspires to restore the Milestone brand, keeping to the traditional sound but with some modern Dunnett-inspired updates. A prototype fiberglass snare in the booth grabbed a lot of attention with its impressive build quality and sound. When asked about his motivation to purchase Milestone, Ronn replied, "Thirty years in this industry and I've never been more excited to be restoring a great Canadian brand like Milestone.

Milestone drums are the hockey of drums - it's part of the fabric of Canadian music."

Ronn Dunnett has also designed novel drumheads with a unique film/coating combination, the Res-O-Coat, which is being manufactured by Remo. The Res-O-Coat heads have a softer, more forgiving stick response combined with Remo durability. Instead of having the usual break-in period which traditional heads require, the Res-O-Coat heads feel like they are pre-conditioned to have that sweet spot from the first play.

A newcomer to the Chicago Drum Show was Canadian drummer, Jeff Woods, of Woods Custom Drums. Jeff exhibited many awesome snares, including a gorgeous 6.5 x 14" rosewood/mahogany (6-ply) with patented wood/metal hybrid hoops, Precision 7-position throw and 42-strand snare wires. This drum was indeed one of the best sounding snares at the show. An impressive first showing by Woods Custom! Jeff Woods reflected on his first Chicago show experience: "I met some amazing new friends and was welcomed with open arms by all. I'm looking forward to next year's show."

Many smaller dealers that brought an amazing mix of used, custom, and vintage drums including several which were extremely rare: a Ludwig & Ludwig 1940s Top Hat kit, 1934-36 Slingerland Abalone Pearl drum kit, early 1930s Leedy Broadway engraved Black Elite snare, and a 1940 Ludwig & Ludwig "Super-Ludwig" in Red Flash Pearl snare. One of the rarest and most valuable drums at the show was found at Joe Luoma's booth: Billy Gladstone's personal gold Gladstone snare drum with three-way tuning. This drum was owned, built, and played by Billy Gladstone himself at Radio City Music Hall. Truly incredible!

Some of the regular exhibitors were Ken Anderson, Eric Binder's Vintage Drums, Bun E. Carlos and Randy Rainwater, Carrington Restorations, Crash Bam Boom, Brian Duvall, Billy Baker Drums, Jim Johnson, Joe Luoma, Mattoon Vintage & Custom, One up One Down Vintage Percussion, Chuck Scalia, Twin Cities Drum Collective, Phil Wilson, Joey "Boom" Mekler, and Texas Vintage Drums.

Other vendors included cymbal companies such as Byrne, Centent, Dream, Paiste, Trinity, Turkish, Wuhan, and Zildjian, who brought their shiny wares to satisfy the connoisseurs of musical metal. Beato, Humes & Berg, and Tackle Instruments displayed creative and practical bags and cases. Creative Percussion, Cymbolt, Drum Factory, No Nuts Percussion, PinchClip, Stick Stuff Grips, and Wingtastic offered a bevy of innovative and helpful percussion-related items and necessities. Retail music stores were well represented by Chicago's own Drugan's Drums and Guitars, Vic' s Drum Shop, as well as Explorer's Percussion, Guitar Center, Skins N Tins, Wood and Weather, and the Hawthorne Drum Shop. Diamond Star, XCEL Drumsticks and Physiostorm brought an impressive display of truly innovative approaches to drumstick design.

For those interested in continued technical and historical

his 36-year career with the Ludwig Drum Company. This clinic included some great anecdotes about his time with Bill Ludwig II and the harsh realities of the music business.

Legendary drummer Les DeMerle started the second day of clinics with a rousing drum solo behind a beautifully crafted solid shell walnut Craviotto drum kit. He tastefully used mallets, brushes, and sticks to demonstrate the variety, textures and dynamics they provide in skilled hands. Les brought decades of experience, ideas, stories, and musicianship to share with the audience. He reminisced about his exciting days with Harry James and interactions with Buddy Rich. Most importantly, Les shared his love of drums and music, and encouraged all to practice, listen to all types of music, and enjoy the craft of drumming. After Les DeMerle, Joe DeRenzo gave a clinic on Jazz brushes and transcribing drums. Joe went through a series of examples show different brush techniques and how they have been applied in music. In the afternoon, Eric Binder together with his trio (Jamal Damien on trumpet and Evan Levine on bass) presented a clinic entitled, "An Introduction to Comping". Eric gave several examples of ways to comp and improvise, and then applied these to music with his trio. He also invited members of the audience to come up and play in an impromptu lesson. Eric emphasized solid time keeping, independence, and keeping in sync with other band members.

drum education, a variety of excellent books were available for sale through Rebeats and at Eric Binder's booth. The dynamic and inspiring Les DeMerle (Jimmy Dorsey, Harry James, David Benoit, Lee Konitz) was on hand to teach on site, helping to inspire beginners and sharpen the skills of more experienced drummers.

Clinics were held upstairs on both days. At the first clinic, Bill Ludwig III, together with Sib Weisbender and various endorsers (Steve Howell [See This Though], Emily Jones [SM-6 Band], Bobby T Torello [Johnny Winter, Grace Slick, Michael Bolton], Mike Arturi [Lovin Spoonfull, Spoonfull of Love], Payden Hilliard [Christine D'clario], described the offerings of WFL III Drums and provided insights into their construction. UK drummer, Jeff Davenport, followed with an interesting clinic on the history of drumheads and tuning. Last up for the day was Jim Catalano, who candidly described his experiences during

In summary, the 31st Chicago Drum Show went off this year without a hitch and sported a large and excited crowd that was not only happy to get out of the house but to gladly spend that time at the largest drum show in the world. The overall feeling of the show was one of good will and camaraderie as everyone appeared to have a good time. For a full line up of all the vendors and clinicians present at the show, check out **Rebeats.com.**

NEW and NOTABLE

Cympad Adds Pink To Its Chromatics Series Of Foam Cymbal Washers.

Cympad has expanded its Chromatics line of colorful, cellular foam cymbal washers with a new pink color option. With this latest addition, Chromatics are now available in a choice of Pink, White, Orange, Yellow, Green, Purple, Red, Crimson, Blue and Camouflage— providing an easy and affordable way for drummers to enhance the look and sound of their kits.

Cympad Chromatics cymbal washers are now available in convenient 5-packs and used by today's top drummers, including Hayley Brownell, Emily Moon, Stephen Perkins, Queen Drums, Elise Trouw and many more. To learn more, visit your favorite drumshop or go to **www.cympad.com.**

RTOM's bh single zone triggers usher in a new era of hybrid drumming.

RTOM corporation is proud to announce the launch of bh single zone triggers, a new product that instantly transforms acoustic drum heads outfitted with Black Holes into a hybrid kit.

With RTOM's bh triggers the days of requiring mesh heads, tools, and time to transform your acoustic heads into an electronic kit, have come to an end. Now, simply snap on and snap off Black Holes equipped with bh triggers to your acoustic heads and drummers can effortlessly transition between acoustic and hybrid playing in seconds.

In addition to benefiting from quick installation, drummers can now also enjoy the low volume, quick attack, and resonance of the Black Hole Practice System coupled with the precision and variety of an electronic kit. Plus, bh Triggers are being offered at an accessible price point, making them a great hybrid kit solution for drummers on a budget.

Features and Benefits

-Allows drummers to switch from acoustic to hybrid playing in seconds.
-Features a sleek low profile design that easily grips onto your black hole rims without the need for tools or adhesives.
-Snap on and snap off black holes in seconds.
-Offers accuracy and high precision sound.
-Works seamlessly with all Black Holes sizes.
-Features a highly durable plastic casing for accidental drum stick hits.
-Affordably priced for drummers on a budget.
-Works with most drum modules.
-Sold in single and five piece packs.

Visit **RTOM.com** and **bigbangdist.com** for updates on product launch. The single pack bh trigger will be sold at retail for $24.99 each, and the five pack bh triggers will be sold at retail for $74.99 per set.

Proel North America Releases the Dave Black Student Signature Snare Drum Pack

Tamburo Drums unites with Alfred Music and Vic Firth to create the Dave Black Student Signature Snare Drum Pack, an extraordinary collection of musical products and accessories in an all-in-one convenient bundle. This world-class drum pack represents the first product collaboration between the master luthiers at Tamburo Drums, the Italian-made line of acoustic drums, and Dave Black, a renowned drummer, educator, and best-selling author. The Dave Black Student Signature Snare Drum Pack combines a world-class snare drum and drum accessories, along with the industry's best-selling drum education book—all at a budget-friendly price.

Included in the pack are:

-Tamburo custom T5 snare drum, specially crafted with innovative materials to be lightweight, durable, and offer professional sound quality (beautifully designed in elegant black sparkle or silver sparkle finishes).
-A pair of custom Dave Black Signature Vic Firth Nova 5B drumsticks.
-Alfred's Drum Method, Book 1, the definitive guide to preparing beginners for all drum and percussion styles.
-High-quality Tamburo snare stand and padded branded water-resistant backpack carrying case, which holds the snare, snare stand, media, books & sheet music, perfect for lessons and gigs.
-The pack is distributed exclusively by Proel North America.

"We have been working on this exciting collaboration for over a year, and we are so proud to finally launch our world-class Student Signature Series at the 2022 NAMM Show," said Proel North America's President, Antonio Ferranti. "Our dealers can offer their customers a beautiful high-quality snare

drum package that includes all the essentials for beginning drummers. With a retail price of $249.99, drummers are able to get started playing with the best snare drum, the best-selling drum method, a high-quality snare stand and a popular pair of drumsticks and go to their lessons and gigs with the highest quality backpack carrying case, and all in a convenient bundle and at a great price. We thank our friends and partners at Alfred Music and Vic Firth for helping us create this world-class drum pack." This beginning drum pack will begin shipping to retailers in time for back-to-school, lessons, and holiday seasons.

Of the Tamburo collaboration, Dave Black says, "Like the fine Italian luthiers of the 17th and 18th centuries, the tradition has continued into the 21st century with the exquisite craftsmanship of Tamburo Drums. Made in Italy, these are among the finest and best-sounding drums I've ever played and heard. I'm proud to play a part in the launch of Tamburo Drums in North America."

"I predict the Dave Black Student Signature Drum Pack will be a big hit. The packaging is a brilliant combo, and it's the perfect start for the drummer in the family." — Peter Erskine

About Dave Black

Dave Black received his Bachelor of Music in percussion performance from California State University, Northridge. A prolific composer and arranger, he has been the recipient of numerous awards and commissions. As one of the top-selling percussion authors in the world, Dave Black is the author or co-author of several best-selling books including *Alfred's Drum Method, Books 1 & 2* (the world's current best seller.) He is the former Vice President and Editor-in-Chief for Alfred Music.

About Tamburo Drums

Founded in Italy in 1982, by master drum luthier Tullio Granatello, Tamburo has been designing, crafting, and producing world-class 'Handmade In Italy' acoustic drums and drumsets, including its signature OPERA series, UNIKA series, and VOLUME series. Characterized by the unsurpassed tone, construction, and technology of each instrument, Tamburo faithfully meets the highest expectations of drummers. Learn more at: **www.tamburodrums.com**

About Proel North America

Founded in 2017, and headquartered in Los Angeles, Proel North America is the exclusive distributor of the Proel family of 'Made In Italy' pro audio, musical instruments, music gear and accessories brands to the USA and Canada. Proel, founded and headquartered in Italy since 1991, designs, engineers, and manufactures world-class pro audio, musical instruments, music gear, and accessories that are faithful to the highest expectations of musicians. Learn more at: **proelnorthamerica.com**

TAMA unveils a new Starclassic Walnut/Birch kit

TAMA is proud to unveil a beautiful new Starclassic Walnut/Birch kit featuring a compelling Light Charcoal finish over a Tamo Ash outer ply. This finish provides a fantastic complement to the texture of the wood grain, creating an intricate, intertwining cascade for a unique visual effect. The design is capped off with Antique Brushed Black Nickel shell hardware, bringing one last stunning, high-end element to this exciting new kit. This design will only be available in very limited quantities and should be highly sought after for its rare visual characteristics.

Fresh off its release at the 2022 NAMM show, this new Limited Edition Starclassic Walnut/Birch kit delivers all the high-end trim and features a drummer could possibly want. Each shell displays a stunning Gloss Charcoal finish over highly-figured Tamo Ash outer plies. This design is further enhanced by the addition of Antique Brushed Black Nickel shell hardware, which completes the aesthetic of this unique and very limited edition Starclassic Walnut/Birch kit. The kit's configuration is 22"x16" Bass Drum w/ Tom Holder Base, 10"x8" Tom Tom, 12"x9" Tom Tom, 14"x12" Floor Tom, 16"x14" Floor Tom, and a Double Tom Holder. The add-on Snare Drum is a 14"x6.5". **Tama.com**

PRODUCT CLOSE-UP

ASI 3DME BT G2 In-Ear Monitor System

By Donn Bennett

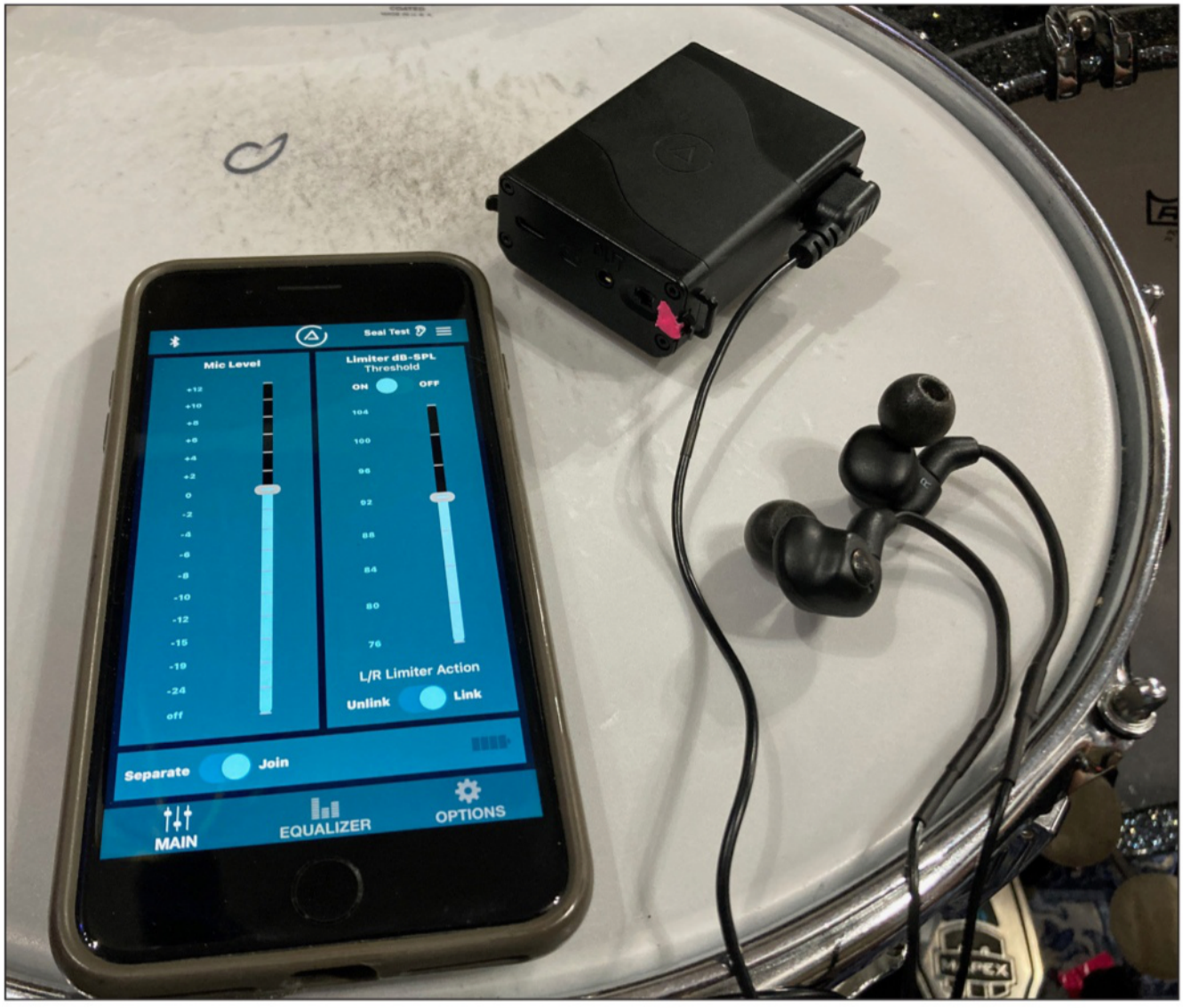
I'm a drummer. I make music by banging on things with wooden sticks. My relationship with my instrument is purely organic. Cords, wires, buttons, and knobs make me nervous. Don't even get me started on downloading an app.

For playing live, the sound isolating earphones I first used actually provided better hearing protection than the custom fit earplugs I had been using, plus my mix was far cleaner and more consistent than the acoustic monitors I was used to. Even better, I could set my set my volume at a very comfortable volume and still hear everything perfectly.

In-ear monitors always seemed like a bad idea to me. When my band decided to try in-ears, I hated the idea. I have always worn earplugs or sound isolating earphones and I have managed to maintain near perfect hearing after almost 50 years of playing professionally. The idea of my entire mix being blasted directly at my eardrums with barely any reduction of the acoustic volume of my drums seemed like a fast track to deafness. I was wrong!!

Regarding using in-ears on stage; I considered the fact that my in-ears supplied such superior ambient noise reduction and the fact that I couldn't hear my bandmates talking onstage to be collateral damage. I figured if the band needed to tell me something they could just say it into their mic or come over and say it in my ear. We would get used to it. I also figured I'd get used to just "sensing" the audience reactions since I could no longer hear their applause (or lack of it.) I'd never considered these things integral parts of my live music experience, until they were gone. I was wrong again! Since moving on from sound isolating headphones, I'm now an in-ear convert. I should have made the switch years ago.

I first heard about ASI Audio from original Chicago drummer, Danny Seraphine. He's a long time ASI endorser. He introduced me to ASI's 3DME BT G2 in-ear monitors. The BT G2s have binaural microphones installed into their earpieces that integrate live stage and room sound with reference-quality monitors. These monitors could allow me all the benefits of in-ear monitoring, without having



to learn to read lips.

I planned to try out the G2s at a gig at a large outdoor venue. I left for the gig an hour early so I'd have plenty of time to dial them in before soundcheck. Seattle traffic squelched that plan and I arrived just in time to set up with my old in-ears before showtime. During our 15-minute intermission I bravely attempted to un-box and set up my new ASI system. Remember I'm a drummer and a technophobe.

The thought of reading a manual, plugging in a bunch of wires, downloading an app, and synching a bunch of wireless stuff gave me high anxiety. But I really didn't want to wait for my next gig to check these things out. The first step on the quick start guide was to download the ASI Audio app onto my phone. That sounds like kryptonite to a technophobe like me, but all I had to do was scan their QR code and within a minute the app was installed, open on my phone, and ready to use. Then I just had to choose a Small, Medium or Large ear tip from the included pack of ear tips and plug the cord into the body pack. I honestly don't know how the body pack paired with my existing wireless transmitter, but they worked the second I hit the "ON" button. I could easily adjust the EQ, limiter, and ambient mic levels with sliders on the app. The overall volume is adjusted with + and - buttons on the body pack. It was literally five minutes from opening the box to being ready to rock. A couple tweaks of the ambient mic, once the band started again, and I didn't have to touch it for the rest of the night.

Did I mention these things sound amazing? First off, you have a super high-quality earpiece. The sound quality and noise isolation is far superior to the Shure SE425s that I have used previously. What makes the ASI G2s truly unique is the "3-D" effect that is created by the mix of the ambient mics and earpiece drivers. ASI's literature claims "embedded binaural microphones capture dynamic natural ambience with accurate 3-D directionality." I'd assumed this was just fancy marketing jargon, but it's exactly what they deliver. It's those same microphones that make it easy to hear the speaking voices of my bandmates onstage, and the reaction of the audience.

So, what's not to like? It may sound petty, but I'm surprised such a well thought out product missed an extremely common and easily avoidable issue. The entire body pack is black. The buttons for the volume control are identified with just raised black on black + and - signs. This is essentially braille. Onstage, I couldn't see anything and I had to wait until a song was over and put on my glasses to find the volume buttons. The same happened with the microscopic "ON-OFF" button that is cleverly hidden on the bottom of the body pack. I'll easily fix both issues with a dot of bright pink nail polish that will make them easy to find on a dark stage. That being said, I should point out that the controls on the phone app are extremely well lit and easy to see and use.

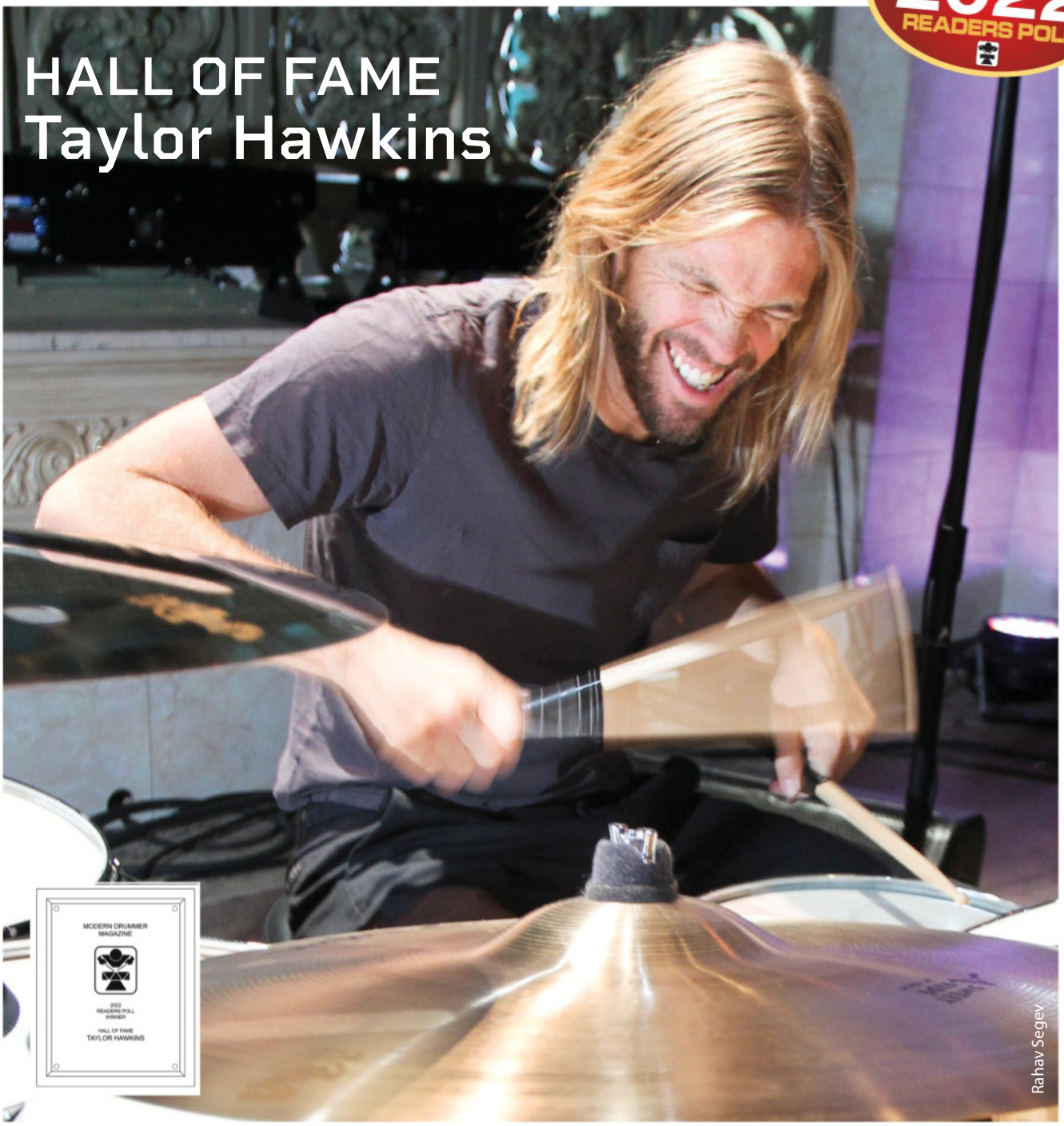
The ASI Audio 3DME BT G2 in-ear monitors' sound is truly three dimensional and fuller than any headphones I've ever experienced. I love these things and I can't wait to use them on my next gig. The list price of the ASI Audio 3DME BT G2 is $799.00 For more information visit: **https://asiaudio.com/products/complete-3dme-btg2-system-in-ear-monitor-system**

MODERN DRUMMER 2022 READERS POLL Winners

It is time to announce the winners of the 2022 *Modern Drummer* Readers Poll. Congratulations to all of the winners, and thanks for your artistry and contributions towards the history and evolution of modern drumming. Thank you for your recordings, concerts, clinics, shows, books, videos, articles, and everything else that you do to promote great drumming and music worldwide. The same thanks go to all of the runners up (who are listed alphabetically) in every category. Some of the votes were very close and went down to the wire. We created some new categories this year, and the reaction was overwhelming. This was one of the largest responses ever to the poll, and we at *Modern Drummer* thank all of you who voted.

MODERN DRUMMER 2022 READERS POLL

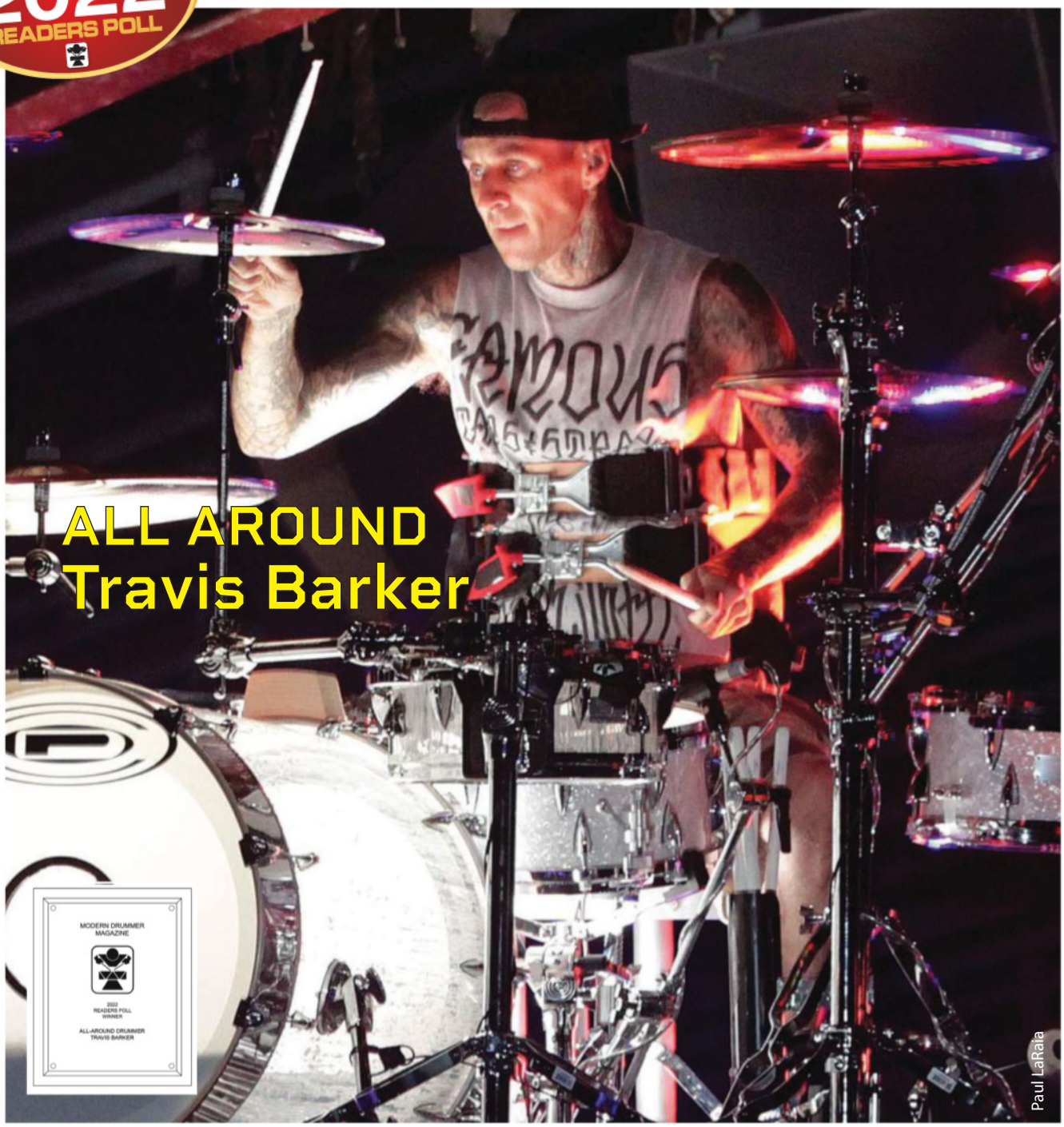
HALL OF FAME
Taylor Hawkins



Rahav Segev

The Modern Drummer Hall Of Fame, 1979-2022

2022 Taylor Hawkins
2021 Sheila E.
2020 Nicko McBrain
2019 Dave Grohl
2018 Clyde Stubblefield
2017 Peter Erskine
2016 Vic Firth
2015 Ian Paice
2014 Carmine Appice
2013 Bernard Purdie
2012 Phil Collins
2011 Jim Chapin
2010 Hal Blaine
2009 Mitch Mitchell
2008 Ginger Baker
2007 Jack DeJohnette
2006 Charlie Watts
2005 Stewart Copeland
2004 Mike Portnoy
2003 Simon Phillips
2002 Steve Smith
2001 Dennis Chambers
2000 Dave Weckl
1999 Roy Haynes
1998 Ringo Starr
1997 Terry Bozzio
1996 Vinnie Colaiuta
1995 Elvin Jones
1994 Larrie Londin
1993 Jeff Porcaro
1992 Max Roach
1991 Art Blakey
1990 Bill Bruford
1989 Carl Palmer
1988 Joe Morello
1987 Billy Cobham
1986 Tony Williams
1985 Louie Bellson
1984 Steve Gadd
1983 Neil Peart
1982 Keith Moon
1981 John Bonham
1980 Buddy Rich
1979 Gene Krupa



Runners Up: Gregg Bissonstte, Vinnie Colaiuta, Steve Gadd, Steve Smith

MODERN DRUMMER 2022 READERS POLL

ROCK and BEST RECORDED PERFORMANCE

Chad Smith

Red Hot Chili Peppers, *Unlimited Love*

Gear: Drum Workshop, Paiste, Vater, Remo

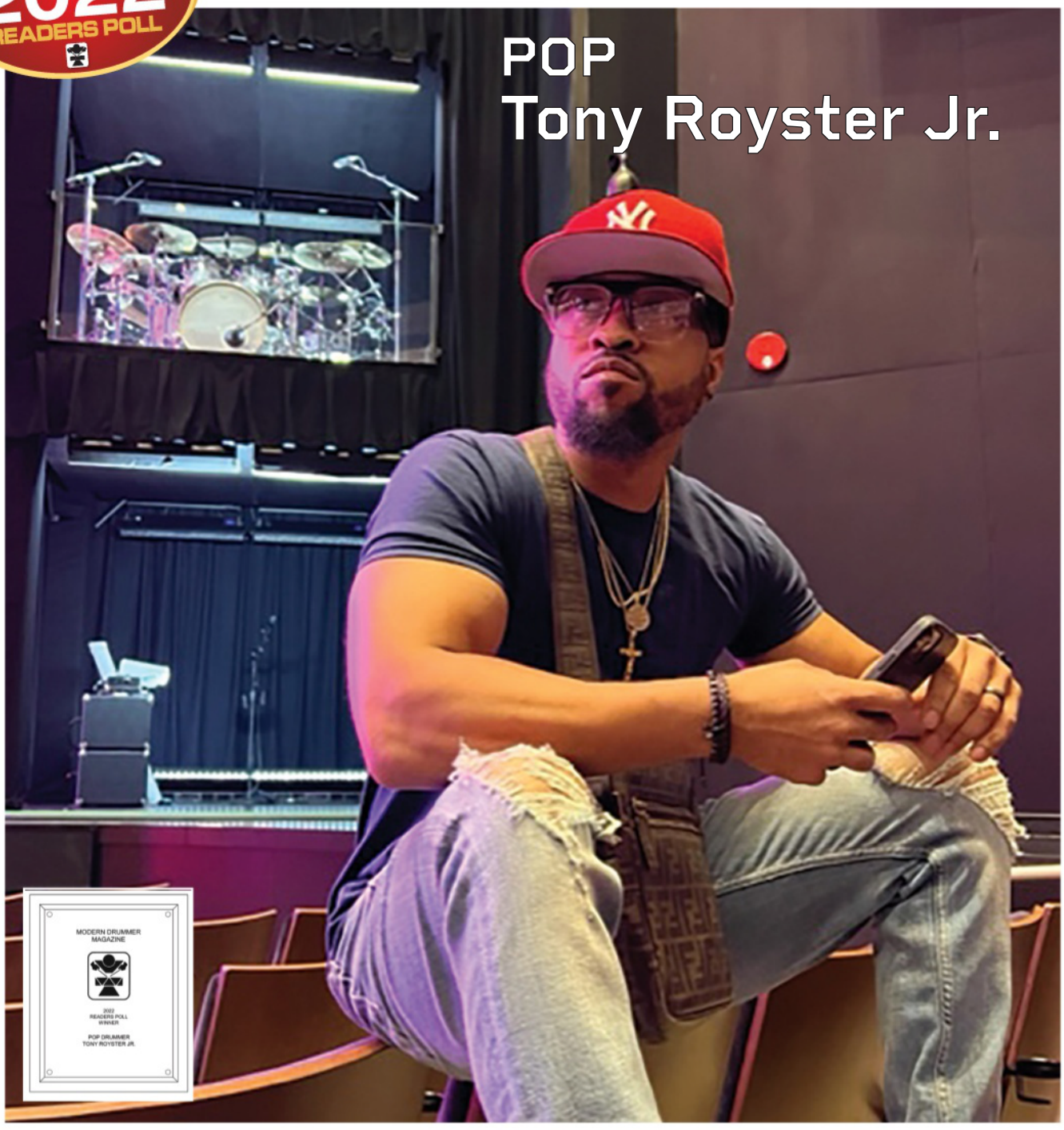
David Mushegain

"I am so honored and grateful to be named Best Rock Drummer and win Best Recorded Performance for Red Hot Chili Peppers *Unlimited Love* by the *Modern Drummer* Readers Poll. I'm speechless, so thank you for supporting me and the music that I play. This is so cool, I really appreciate it. I'm going to keep trying to get better, keep playing hard, and keep doing my thing because that's all that I can do. I hope to see everybody out on the road, come see us play." –**Chad Smith**

Rock Runners Up: Tre Cool, Alex Gonzalez, Eric Singer, Todd Sucherman
Recorded Performance Runners Up: Steve Gadd Band *Live at the Blue Note Tokyo,* Iron Maiden *Senjutsu* (Nicko McBrain,) Rob Silverman *Drumology,* Styx *Crash of the Crown* (Todd Sucherman)

MODERN DRUMMER 2022 READERS POLL

POP
Tony Royster Jr.

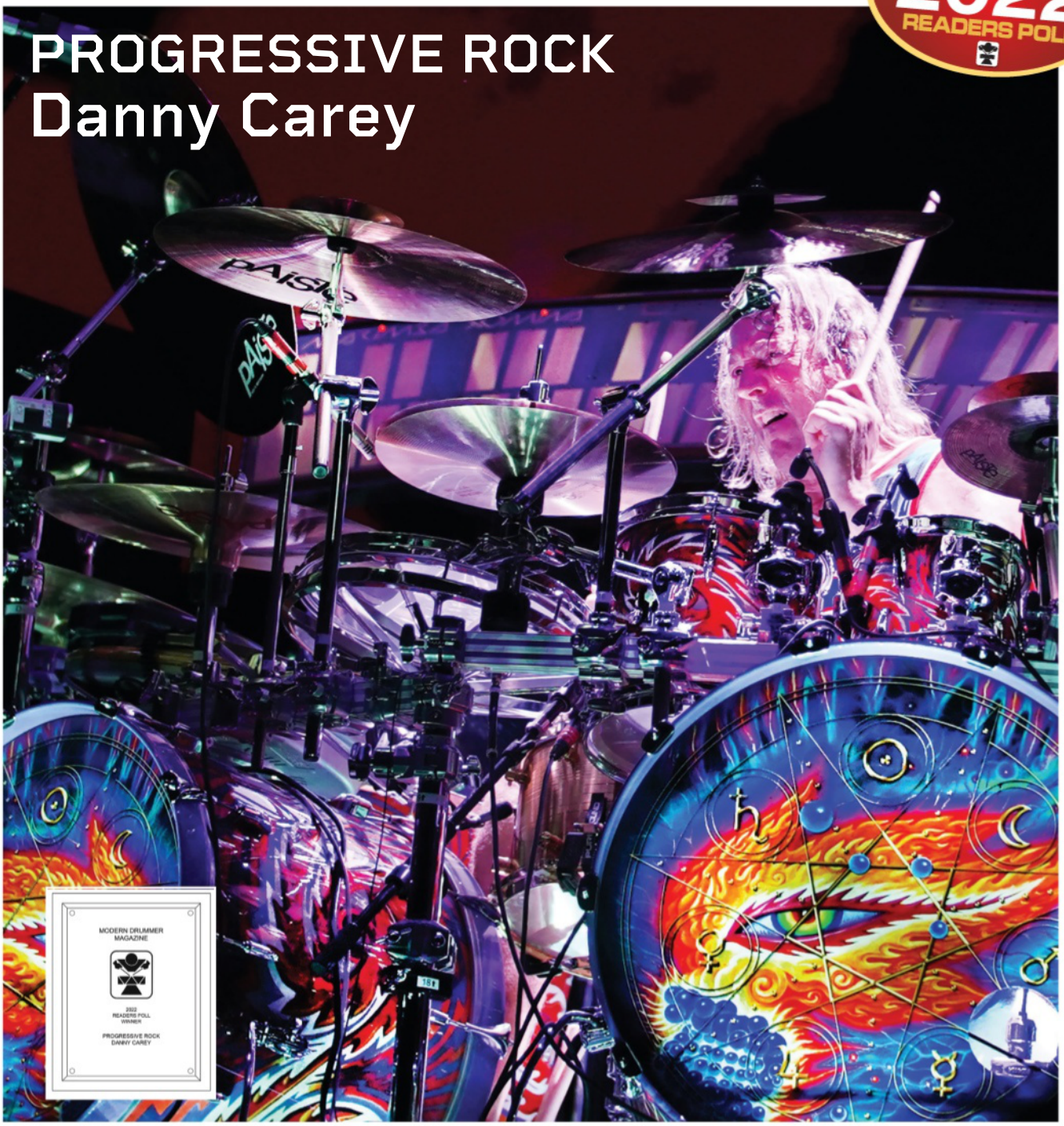


"I just want to take a second, to thank all of my fans, for all of the love and support. I truly appreciate it, and don't take it for granted. I am honored to have been voted, top Pop drummer, in this year's *Modern Drummer* Readers Poll. It couldn't have happened without you guys. Much love, and I press forward, hoping to continue motivating and inspiring others." –**Tony Royster Jr.**

Runners Up: Jotan Afanador, Giulliana Merello, Mike Sleath, Aaron Spears

MODERN DRUMMER 2022 READERS POLL

PROGRESSIVE ROCK
Danny Carey

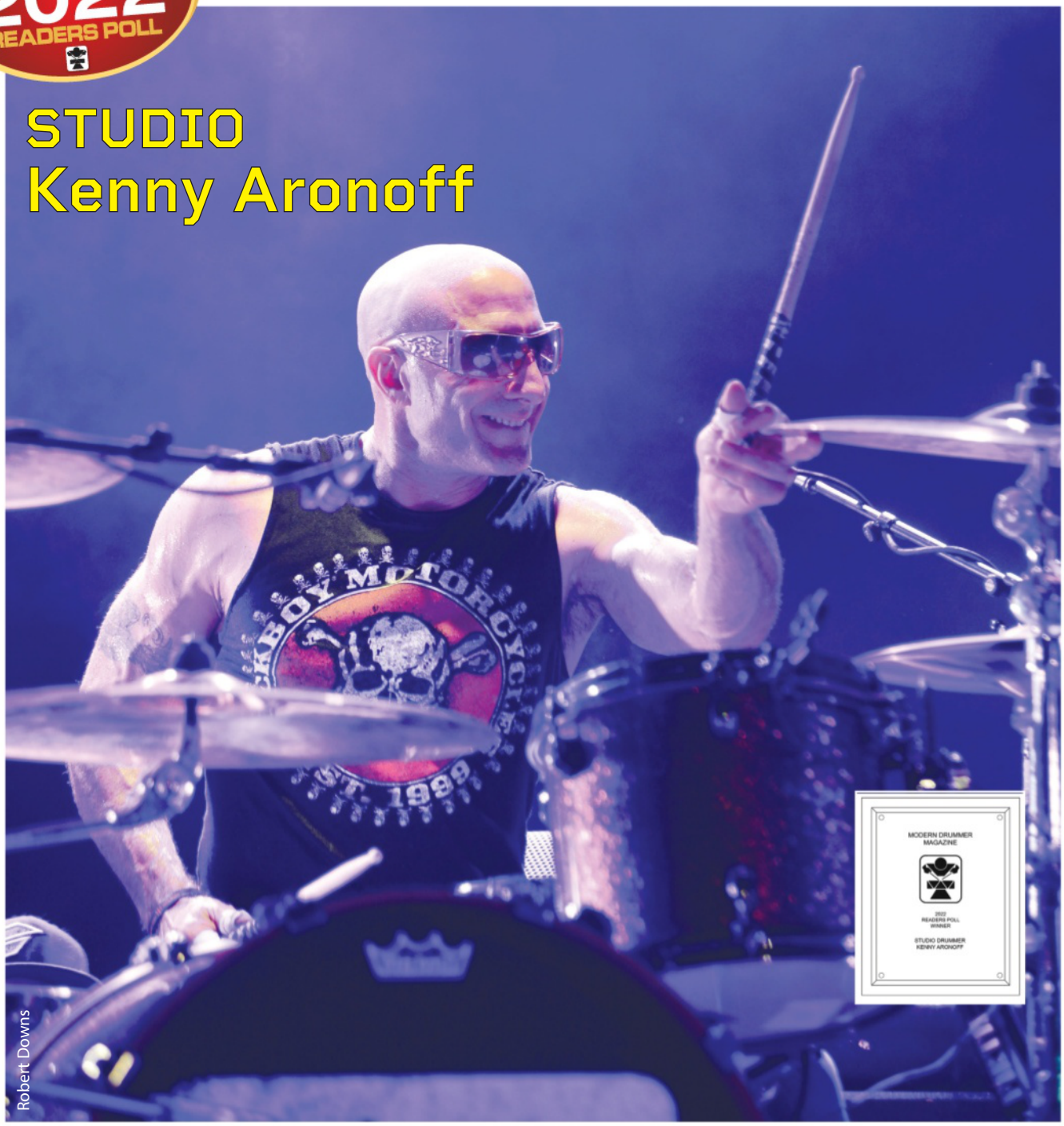


"Thanks to all of you percussionist, drummers, and fans for voting for me *Modern Drummer*'s Readers Poll Prog Rock Drummer of the Year. I'm very honored to accept this award and very humbled to be selected to the list of nominees in this category. Special thanks to Gavin, Mike, Carl, and Nick. I am proud to be in your company as nominees and would not be here without the inspiration I've drawn from all of you." –**Danny Carey**

Runners Up: Nick D'Virgilio, Gavin Harrison, Carl Palmer, Mike Portnoy

MODERN DRUMMER 2022 READERS POLL

STUDIO
Kenny Aronoff



Robert Downs

"Modern Drummer Magazine is the greatest drum magazine in the world. I have read every issue from day one and I am honored to be part of the 2022 Readers Poll. Thank You everyone and thank you *Modern Drummer*." –**Kenny Aronoff**

Gear: Tama, Zildjian, Vic Firth, Evans, LP, Shure, Royer Microphones, Mojave Microphones, BAE (British Audio Equipment,) Humes and Berg, Porter and Davies.

Runners Up: Jay Bellerose, Russ Miller, Ash Soan, Nir Z.

MODERN DRUMMER 2022 READERS POLL

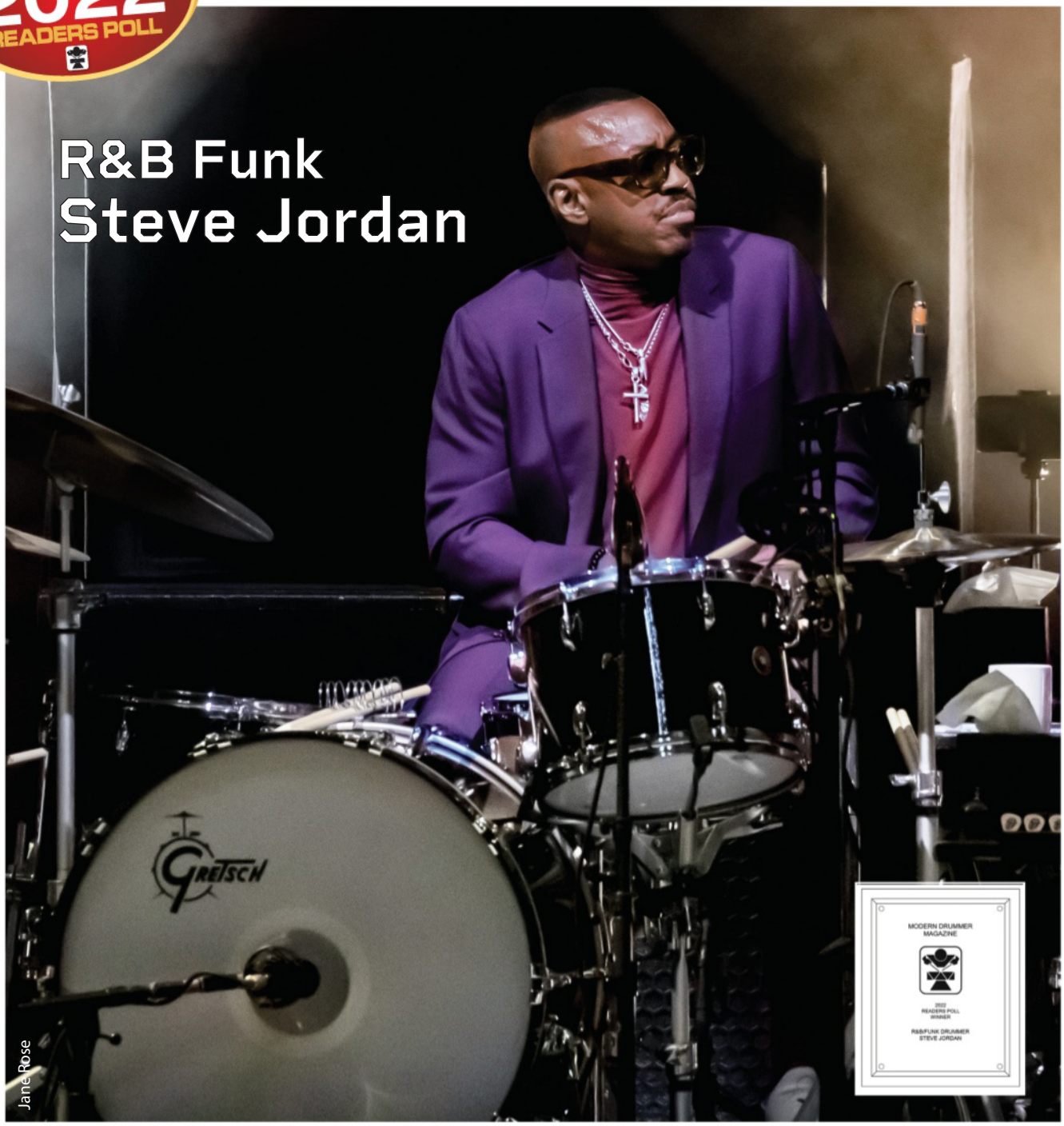
METAL
Jay Weinberg

"It is truly an honor to be named Metal Drummer o f the Year in the 2022 *Modern Drummer* Reader's Poll. I distinctly remember being a teenager, buying my first copy of *Modern Drummer* Magazine at my local drum shop. It's surreal and humbling to receive this recognition. Thank you so much to *Modern Drummer*, the entire MD community, and everyone who voted. Your support means the world to me. Tomas, Brann, Eloy, and Matt: you guys know how much your music means to me. Thank you for the endless inspiration you've given the drumming community, and for everything you do to push the instrument forward. Thank you to my wife Chloe, our dog Papaya, my parents and siblings, and my bandmates in Slipknot for the love and encouragement. I owe you all a debt of gratitude I can never repay. To everyone who's been in my corner all these years, thank you so much. I sincerely appreciate it." –**Jay Weinberg**

Runners Up: Eloy Cassagrande, Brann Dailor, Matt Garstka, Tomas Haake

MODERN DRUMMER 2022 READERS POLL

R&B Funk
Steve Jordan



Jane Rose

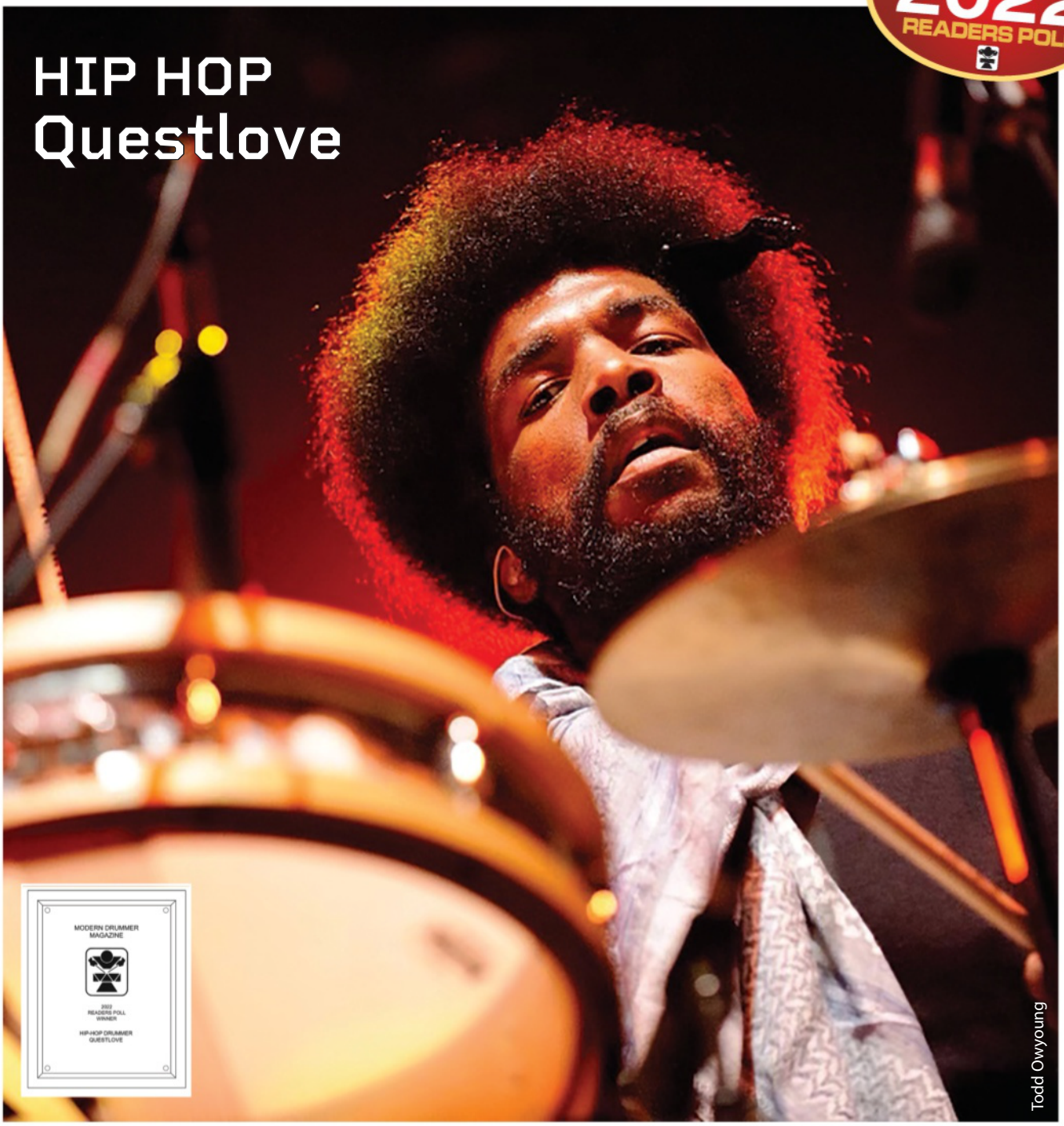
"My heartfelt thanks to all the participants in the poll / voting. I always appreciate the acknowledgement and never take it for granted. I play with my heart and soul, so thanks for listening. Keep groovin', swingin', rockin' & rollin'. –**Steve Jordan**

Runners Up: David Garibaldi, Daru Jones, Zigaboo Modeliste, Anderson .Paak

Gear: Yamaha, Paiste, Vic Firth

MODERN DRUMMER 2022 READERS POLL

HIP HOP
Questlove



Todd Owyoung

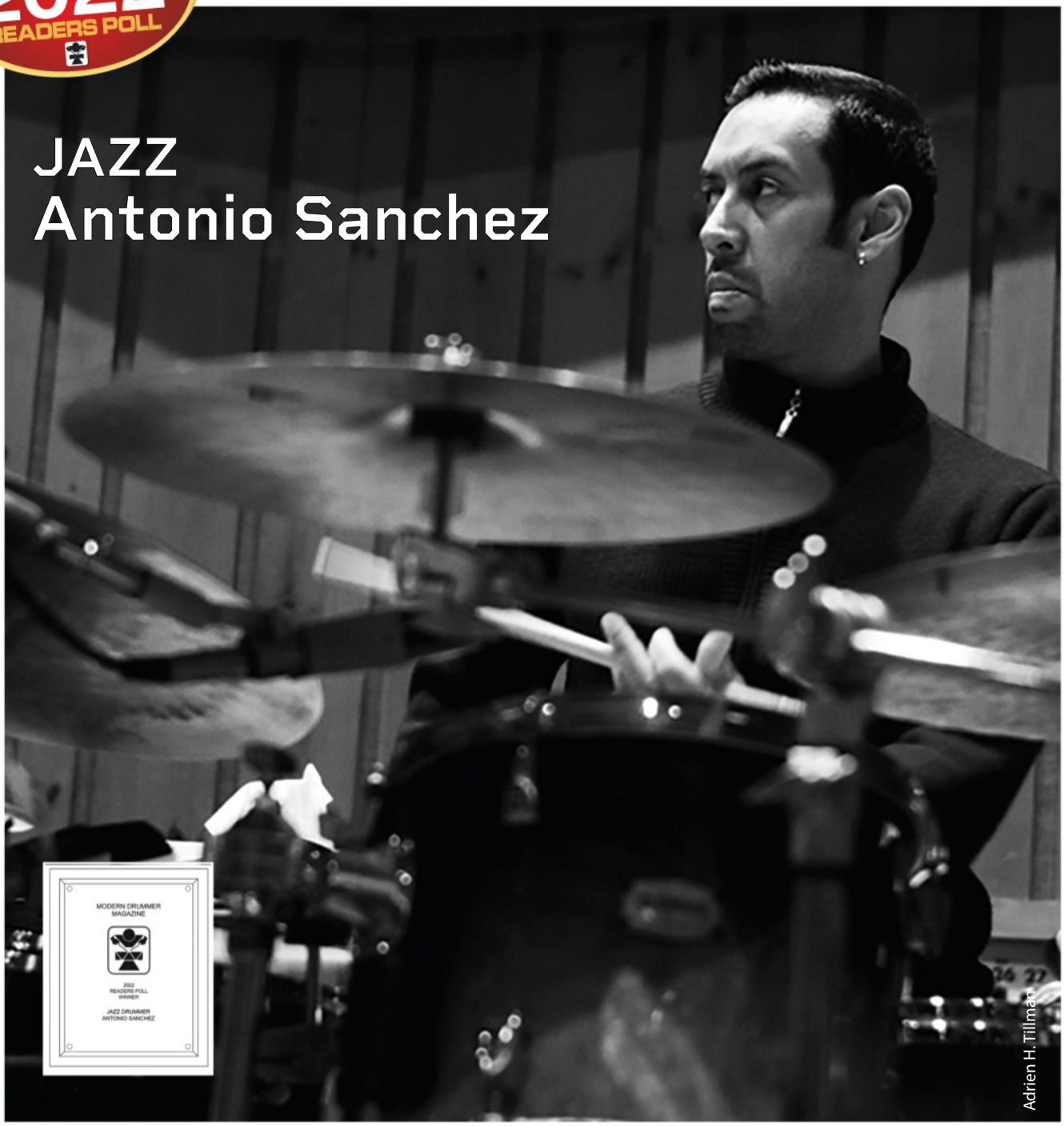
"I grew up reading *Modern Drummer*. Being voted #1 Hip-Hop Drummer' is crazy. I'm very thankful to all of the fans and readers who support me and continue to do so." –**Questlove**

Runners Up: Trevor Lawrence Jr., Tony "Rico" Nichols, Anderson .Paak, Karriem Riggins

Gear: Ludwig, Zildjian

MODERN DRUMMER 2022 READERS POLL

JAZZ
Antonio Sanchez



"It's an honor to receive this honor from the MD community. All the other drummers in the jazz category are great friends that I respect and admire immensely and I truly believe that anybody could have gotten the award as their talents are nothing short of amazing. Thank you all for your vote and for listening to what we do." –**Antonio Sanchez.**

Runners Up: Les DeMerle, Marcus Gilmore, Eric Harland, Bill Stewart

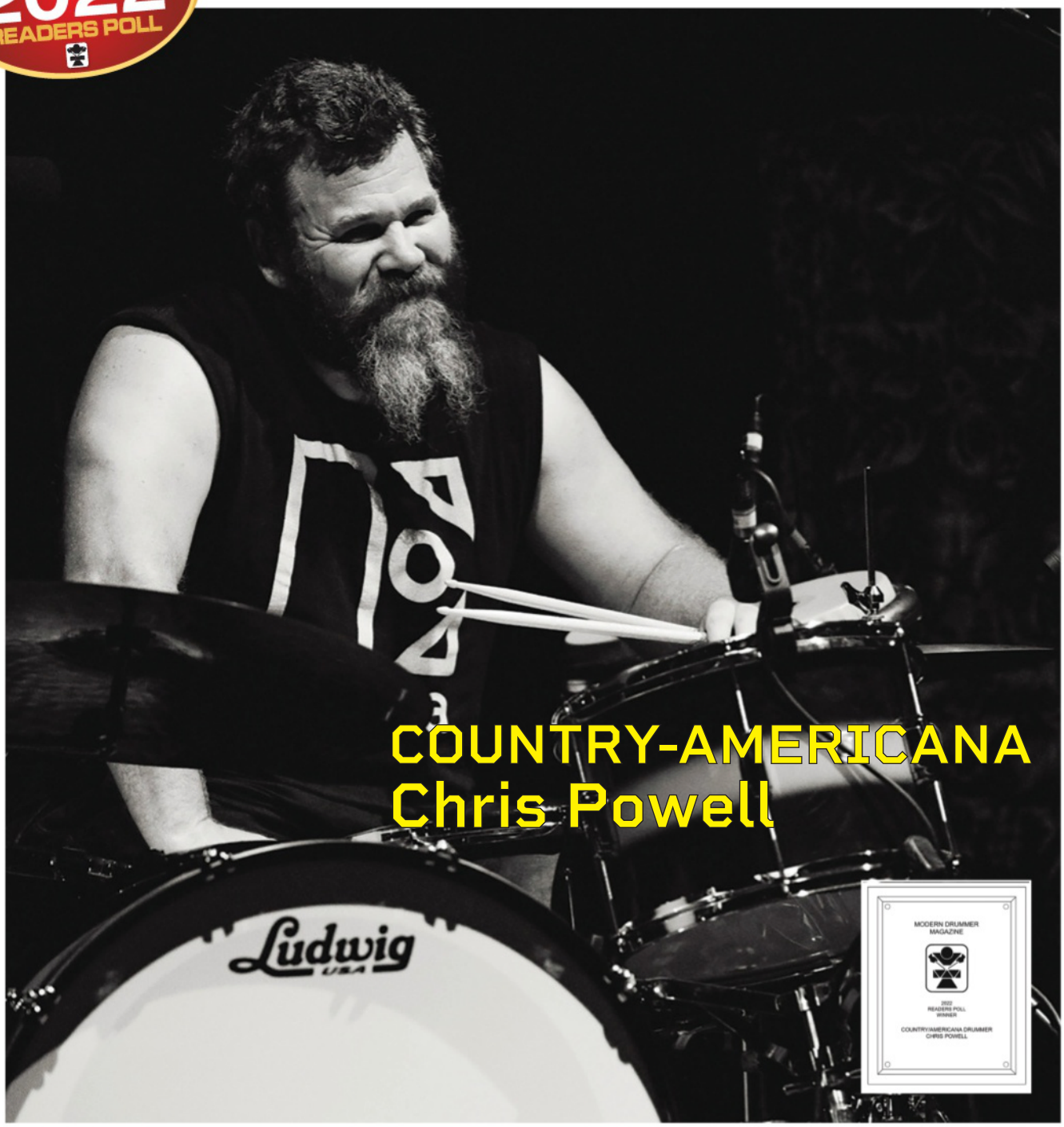
Gear: Yamaha, Zildjian

"I just want to thank everyone at *Modern Drummer,* everyone that voted for me in the Readers Poll, and every other drummer nominated in the Readers Poll. Thank you very much!" –**Dennis Chambers**

Gear: Pearl, Zildjian

Runners Up: Gergo Borlai, Billy Cobham, Marco Minnemann, Simon Phillips.

MODERN DRUMMER 2022 READERS POLL



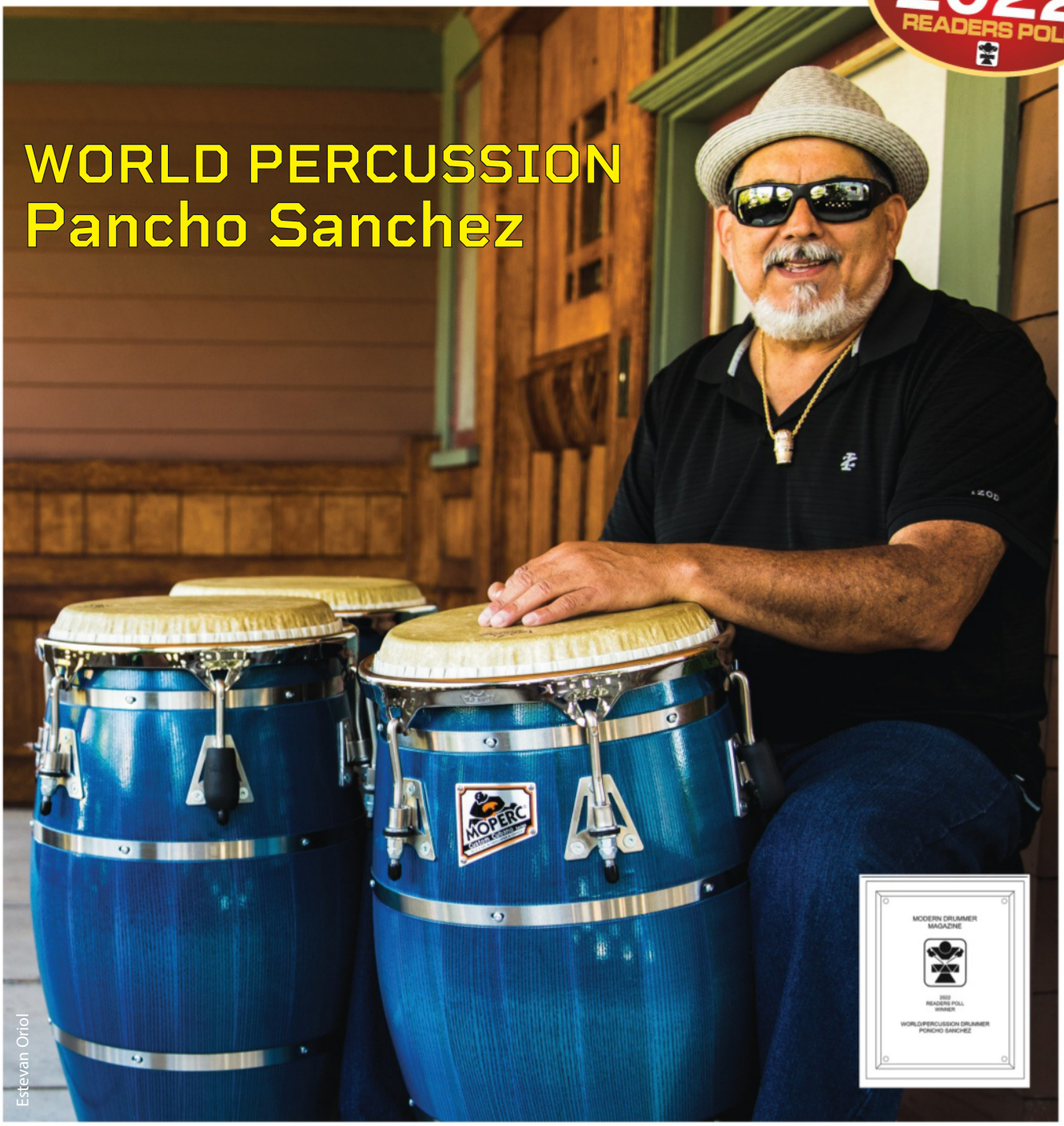
"I've been reading *Modern Drummer* since I was thirteen years old and it's inspired me along my path. I am floored and honored to be recognized for this award. Thank you to everyone who voted for me and thank you to the *Modern Drummer* community and all the drummers who have inspired me" –**Chris Powell**

Runners Up: Chad Cromwell, Paul Leim, Derek Mixon, Rich Redmond

Gear: Vic Firth, Ludwig, Zildjian, Remo

MODERN DRUMMER 2022 READERS POLL

WORLD PERCUSSION
Pancho Sanchez

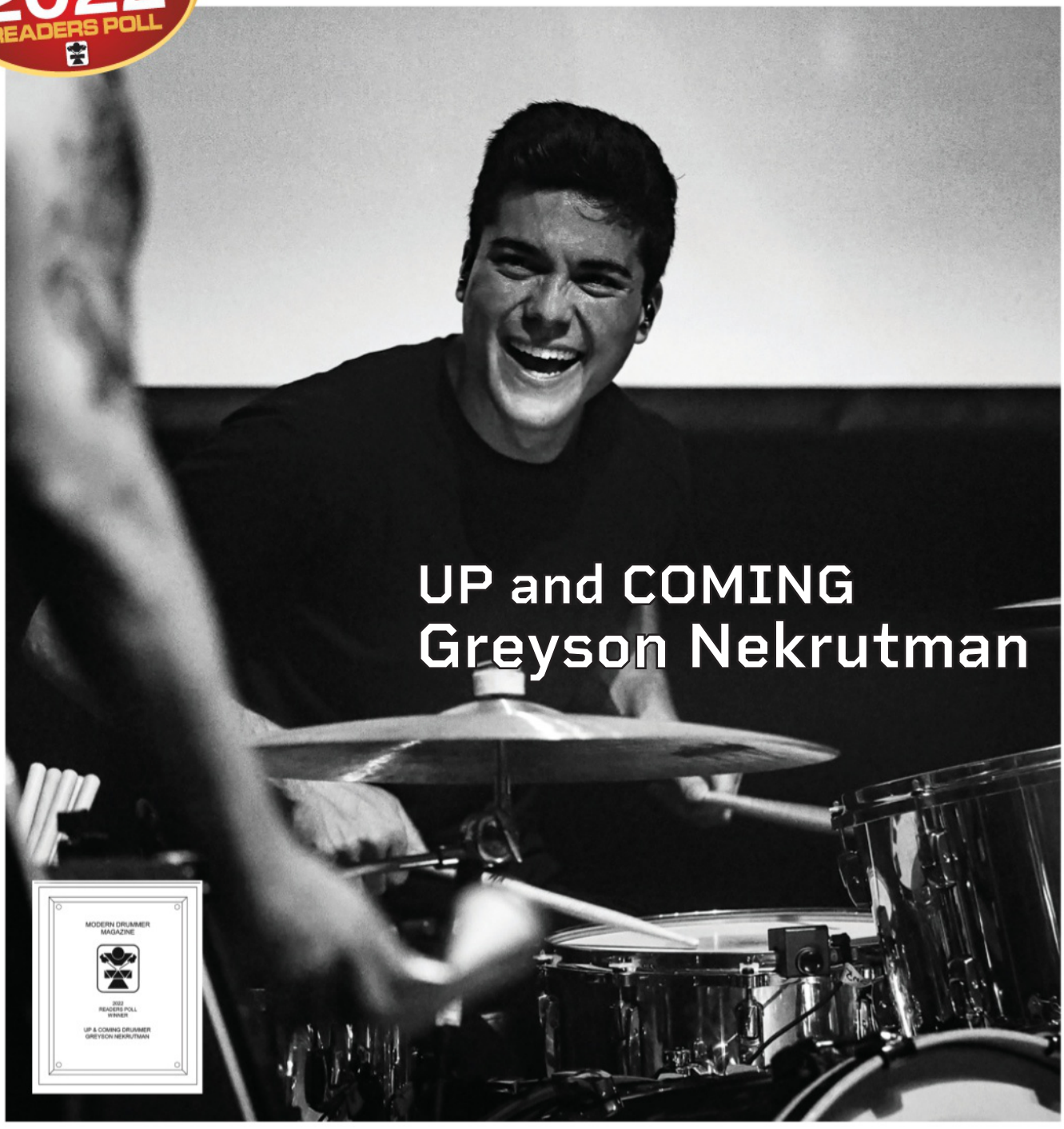


Estevan Oriol

"Thank you to all of the readers and supporters of both myself and *Modern Drummer*. I also want to thank Modern Drummer for their continued support. It is very important that we keep music and culture alive and thriving at all times!" –**Poncho Snachez**

Runners Up: Trilok Gurtu, Mickey Hart, Giovanni Hidalgo, Zakir Hussain

MODERN DRUMMER 2022 READERS POLL



"My appreciation is deep for each supporter of my musical journey. You truly are the drive behind what I do on the drumset and for your time and votes I would like to offer my sincere thanks and gratitude" –**Greyson Nekrutman**

Runners Up: Nic Collins, Jackson Daw, Daniel Fang, Sarah Thawer

Gear: Pearl, Remo, Vic Firth, Meinl, 64 Audio.

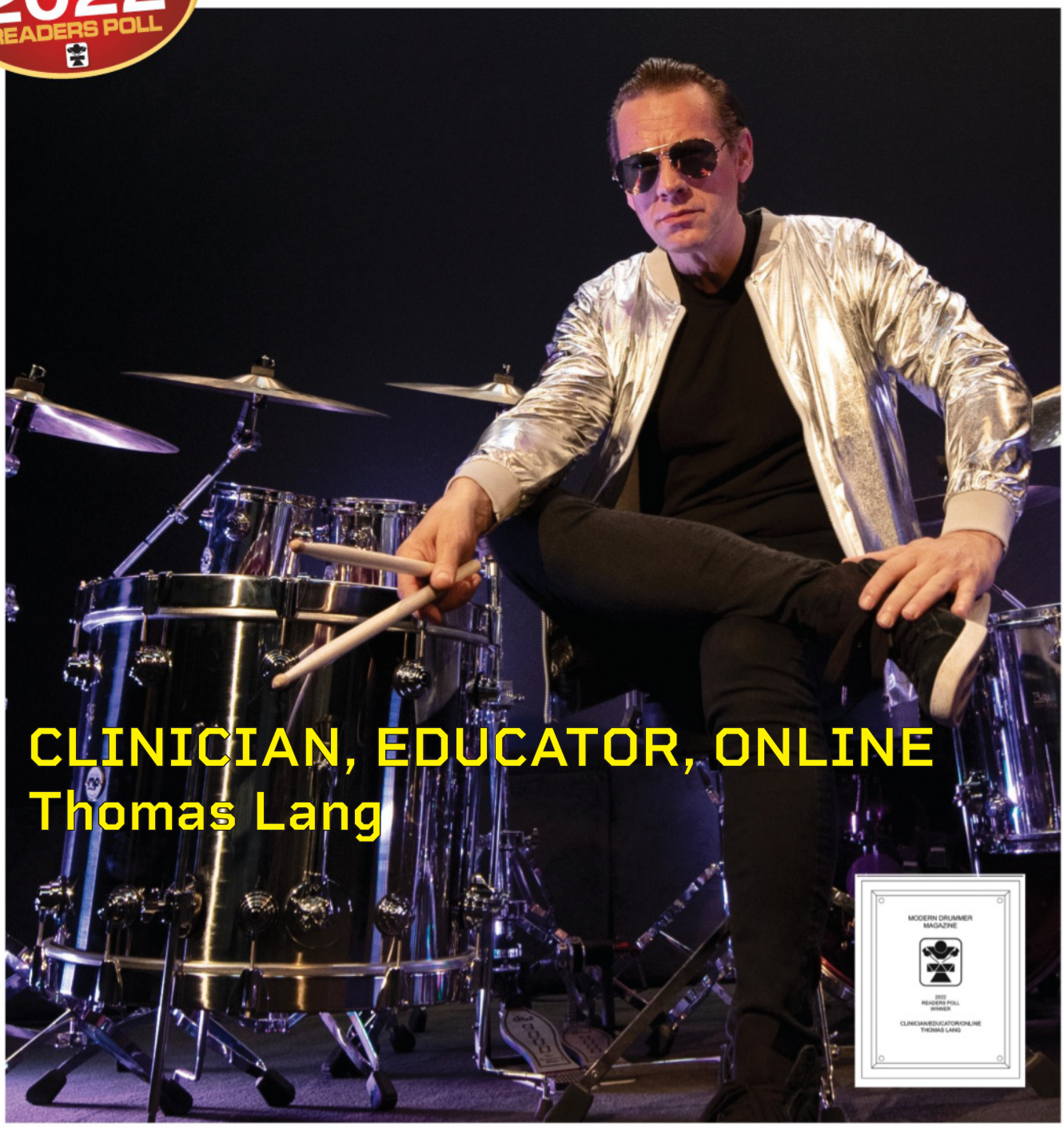
MODERN DRUMMER 2022 READERS POLL

STREAMING, SOCIAL MEDIA
Luke Holland @lukehollandd

"I'm honestly surprised to have won this award & very thankful to everyone who voted. I just want to remind everyone out there that may be reading this; while social media is an incredible tool to help you where you want to be, nothing beats the feeling of a live show & traveling the world doing what you love most. Dream hard & dream big!" –**Luke Holland**

Runners Up: Jorge Garrido @elessteparіosiberiano, Taylor Gordon @thepocketqueen, Samus Paulicelli @66samus, Craig Reynolds @reynlord

MODERN DRUMMER 2022 READERS POLL



CLINICIAN, EDUCATOR, ONLINE
Thomas Lang

"A massive THANK YOU to all the reader's of Modern Drummer magazine and to all who have been so supportive of me over the years. Thank you to Modern Drummer magazine for being the ultimate hub for the worldwide drumming community and for still being the absolute number one in drumming education, information and entertainment. This is a huge honor for me. Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!" –**Thomas Lang**

Gear: Drum Workshop, Meinl, Remo, Vic Firth, Roland , Audix , QSC Audio, JK Drum Systems, Audimute

Runners Up: Dom Famularo, Tommy Igoe, Todd Sucherman, Dave Weckl

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EDUCATIONAL PRODUCT
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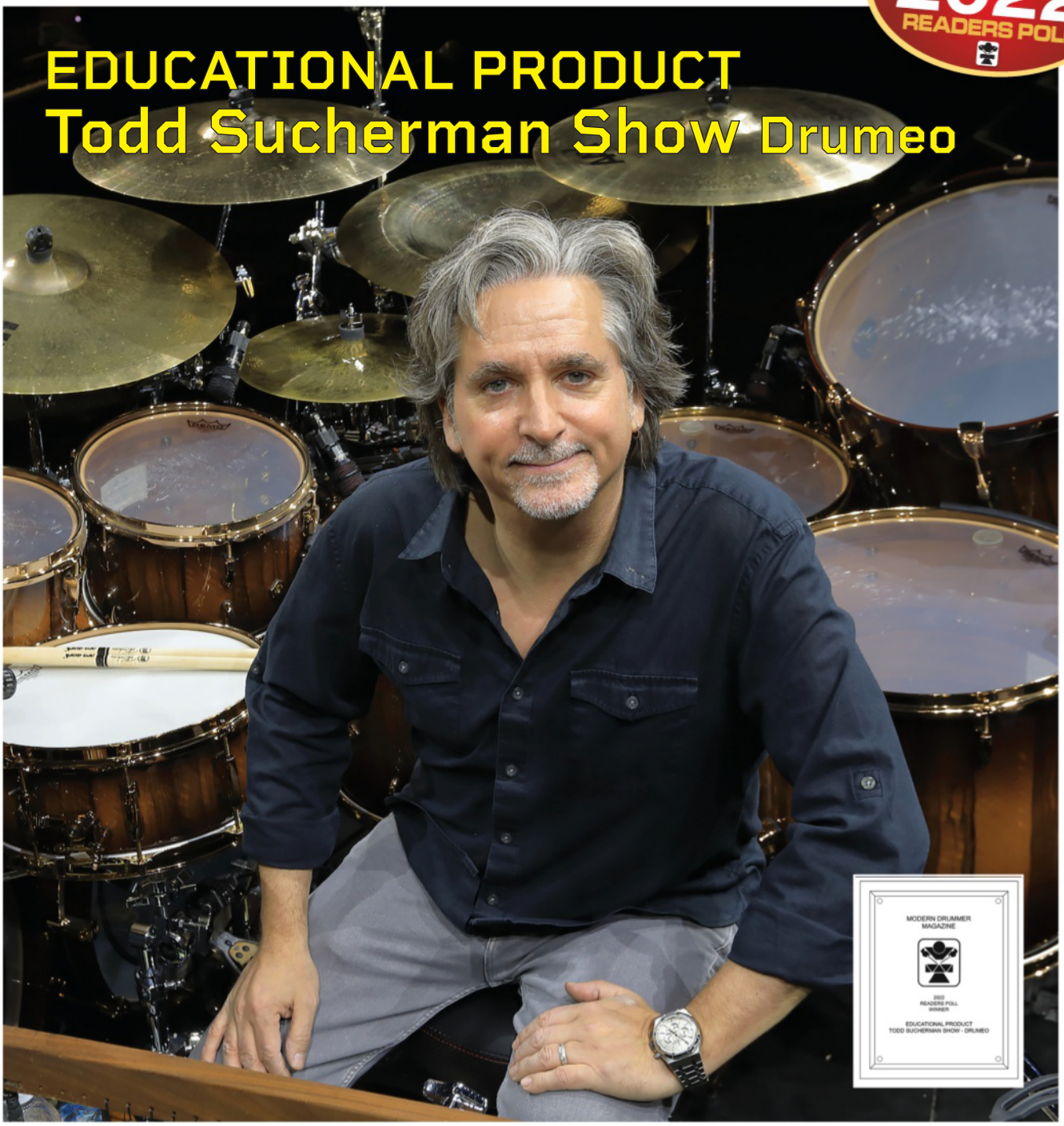

"My thanks to those who voted. It's an honor to be nominated." –**Todd Sucherman**

Runners Up: Carmine Appice "The Ultimate Realistic Rock," Steve Gadd "Gaddiments," Thomas Lang "Drum Universe" Drum Channel, Dave Weckl Online School.

Gear: Pearl, Sabian, Remo, Promark, Audix, Drum Art Custom Bass Drum Heads, Artisan Custom Stick Holders

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Rob Silverman

and Drumology: Drum Duets with the Masters

Brendan Joyce Photography

By Mark Griffith

Drummer Rob Silverman and his brother pianist Michael Silverman are modern day musical entrepreneurs. They own and run a popular record label called Autumn Hill Records, produce jazz festivals throughout the midwest, lead bands, compose, record, and produce records, and write instructional music books.

Rob is best known for his series of *Drumology* records where he plays drum duets with some of the greatest drummers in the world including: Dave Weckl, Steve Smith, Steve Gadd, Todd Sucherman, Gregg Bissonette, Gergo Borlai, Simon Phillips, Billy Cobham, Gavin Harrison, and many more. With Rob's concept of recording drum duets, he has nearly put drum duets on the map as a recognized musical genre. *Drumology* took everyone by surprise, *Drumology 2* is being released this month and is sure to turn heads, and *Drumology 3* is being finished as we speak. Rob offers a unique view into some of history's greatest drummers from behind the glass and as a collaborator. Mike offers a unique view from the composer and producer's viewpoint because he is the one writing the music for each specific drummer to play. Most importantly, the proceeds from all of the *Drumology* projects go to the Neil Peart Cancer Research Fund. *Modern Drummer* was lucky enough to sit down with these two musicians and talk about their new records, label, hometown, the greatest drummers in the world, and of course… ***DRUMOLOGY***!

MD: Rob, let's talk about your background a bit.
RS: I'm a drummer from St. Louis Missouri, for the last 20 years my brother (Michael) and I have led a band called Bach to The Future that transforms the music of Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart into jazz, latin, and rock styles. Saxophonist Eric Marienthal often plays in the band, and we have a lot of fun. We play jazz festivals in the US, Canada, and next year we're heading to Europe. Michael does a lot of jingle work, we own a commercial studio, as well as our home studios. All of that has led (in many different ways) to these *Drumology* records.

My father played cello in the St. Louis symphony while we were growing up, so I started out with classical percussion lessons: tympani, vibes, and snare drum. At age 13, I discovered Neil Peart. I started listening to the classic albums *2112* and *All the World's a Stage,* and that set a standard for me. Throughout high school and college that's how I played, using the drumset as a melodic instrument, rather than just playing backbeat grooves. Shows and concerts were just a vehicle for the big drum solo. I began teaching at Fred Pierce's Studio Drum Shop and have been teaching there for 25 years. My instructional books *Drumset 101*, and *Drumset for All Ages* are among Mel Bay's best sellers.

For the last 15 years my brother and I have run our own record label called Autumn Hill Records. My first solo recording for the label was a recording called *Drums of the World.* I grew up playing in a lot of Greek, Klezmer, Middle Eastern and Irish bands, and I am a percussionist that collects all sorts of exotic percussion, so *Drums of the World* was a natural thing for me to do. That record includes everything from West African drumming, to Taiko drumming, to Samba drumming. Those recordings have been used for TV many times on the HBO series *Leftovers* and *So You Think You Can Dance,* and on films including the Martin Scorsese film called *Silence*.

Around that time, we became nearly full-time recording artists, and we started doing a lot more recordings. Autumn Hill now has a catalog of over 900 hundred recordings that include the new records by The Dave Weckl Band, and drummer Pat Petrillo's Big Rhythm Band is being released next month.
MD: What was it like coming up in a great musical city like St. Louis?
RS: St. Louis has always been a great musical city. Tina Turner and Ike Turner are from here, so is Miles Davis. There are great jazz clubs here and lots of jam sessions. There are a few universities like Webster University and UMSL here that have very strong jazz programs. It's a good scene.
MD: How about the St. Louis drumming tradition?
RS: There are a lot of great drummers who have come out of St. Louis: Demarius Hicks, Montez Coleman, Steve Davis, Kevin Gianino, and Dave Weckl. Kim Thompson was a student of mine. Gary Sykes is one of our elder statesmen of jazz drumming in St. Louis. He plays in a trio called Tracer with piano legend Ptah Williams and bassist Darrell Mixon, and they are on our label now. Of course there is also Fred Pierce's Studio Drum Shop which is the oldest drum shop in the country. Fifty one years now.
MD: So how did the original concept of *Drumology* come about?
RS: We were recording a song in 2013, and I had the idea to have Dave Weckl and myself do some solo trading in a drum battle sort of approach. We had some mutual friends, I approached him, and he agreed to do it. We enjoyed the whole double drumming concept so much that we wondered if double drumming could become its own genre of music. That was how it started. I enjoyed the experience with Dave so much that I wondered if some of my other drum heroes would want to do the same thing. That one track with Dave started an entire journey that continues today as we are working on *Drumology Volume 3*. I approached Steve Smith and Simon Phillips

Brendan Joyce Photography

Brendan Joyce Photography

next, and I was amazed when they said yes. Then I approached Gregg Bissonette, John Blackwell, and St. Louis drummer (and lifelong friend) Casey Adams. It really took off from there.

MD: Michael, how are you involved in the *Drumology* recordings?

MS: All of the music is written, arranged and produced by either myself or by Jay Oliver from the Dave Weckl Band.

MD: Let's talk about all of the great drummers that did these records. Dave was the original inspiration so let's start with him.

MS: Putting together the tune for Dave Weckl and Rob was the first time we had written a tune for two drummers so that was a challenge. Luckily, we had Dave's own tune "Master Plan" from his first solo record in 1990 as a guide and inspiration. Dave and Steve Gadd played together and traded on that tune, so we could use that as a template. That template includes a big, open section in the middle for drum trading, sections where each drummer plays a groove his own way and panning the drummers a bit so you can hear them separately. That was a good way to get started. Eventually, Rob and I created some different approaches, but that provided a good launching point. Soon after, we created some songs where Rob and the drumming guest would actually play an interlocking groove with two drummers.

RS: On our first tune with Dave, we wanted to feature him unencumbered, so we wrote a Montuno section and gave him free-reign and used that for some trading.

MD: Double drumming is an interesting thing, how do you approach double drumming with these great drummers?

MS: When we first started sending the tracks out, we would send them out with Rob playing and big open sections for the guest to play. That's the most obvious way to do this. As we went along, we got more creative, and wanted to give more freedom to the guest drummers to make compositional choices about where they

From left: John Patitucci, Rob Silverman, and Michael Silverman

would fit into the tune. We started letting the guest drummer play the track first, and with a few guys we even had them play over a click track without any music, and we composed a tune around what they had recorded over the click. Those tracks were (probably) the ones with the wildest, most interesting results!

Brendan Joyce Photography

MD: That sounds like a pretty difficult (but interesting) compositional process. After Dave, you approached Steve Smith, how did that come about?

RS: When Jay Oliver moved back to St. Louis, we found each other and started hanging out and doing everything together. Jay had worked with Steve in the past, and he had the idea to write a tune based around the Indian konnakol (the Indian rhythmic vocalization tradition) that Steve does so well. Jay and Steve worked together on the arrangement and Steve composed and performed the specific composing for the konnakol sections. Steve gave me a crash course in the concept and technique of konnakol so we could play those scripted passages together, and I have to say it was a dream come true. Eric Marienthal played saxophone, and Michael played a synth solo too.

MS: Whenever we compose a tune for a drummer to play on, we really try to find the unique thing about that specific drummer and compose the song around their strengths and personal style. Each song is tailored to the drummer that played on it.

RS: We would approach each song from a fan's point of view. We would ask ourselves, what would the guest drummer want to play and what do drummers like to hear?

RS: Jay and I mixed that tune in my studio. He is an absolute genius! I was amazed that (at the time) Jay hadn't worked on ProTools much, he's a Digital Performer guy. So I watched Jay learn and

Brendan Joyce Photography

master ProTools right in front of my eyes. Michael and I learned a lot from watching Jay work, he's a great engineer and composer!

MD: How did Simon Phillips' tune work?

RS: Michael wrote a song based on the sound of Simon's first *Protocol* record from the 80s, where Simon composed everything on the keyboards.

MS: Simon used a lot of pitched percussion sounds on the tunes on that record. He really likes the sounds of marimbas and kalimbas. I used those sounds as a starting point, and I tried to write the way that he writes. That became the tune called "Brave New World."

He asked if we wanted him to do anything specific, and we told him that we really wanted him to use the Octobans in a groove. He created this cool Protocol-Octoban groove that we really liked. In our minds, that is a part of his signature sound.

From left: Jay Oliver, Dave Weckl and Rob Silverman mixing a track

RS: We approached Gregg Bissonette next for the track "Ten Times Ten." He plays Dixon Drums, and they are a St. Louis company so there was a connection there through a mutual friend. We produced his entire session over Skype. Gregg is such a pro; he came in very prepared. He said he would play the tune three different ways. Initially he played it as if he was doing it for his own record. He then did a second take from a pure rock approach, and finally a third take that was much more fusion-ish. Each of the takes –– from beginning to end –– were brilliant 'first takes' and any one of them could have been THE take! Hearing those three takes honestly blew me away. Given that the main aspect of the tune is the odd 10/8 time signature, we opted to keep it there throughout, including his amazing drum solo, and an entire drumming intro with him and myself.

MS: That tune started out as a sort of "sequel" to a tune by violinist Jerry Goodman. We had done some gigs with Jerry, and he had a tune in 13/8 called "Tears of Joy." When we played that with him it was really challenging, so I decided to write a tune that was equally as challenging for him, and that's where "Ten Times Ten" came from. Jerry was kind enough to play on the tune with Gregg too.

MD: You got to feature the wonderful late great John Blackwell on a song. What can you tell me about that?

RS: I met John in Florida at an open mic night at a popular beach bar. I was about to play a song, and a friend came and whispered to me that John Blackwell had just come in. I looked up at him in horror as they counted in the song "Play That Funky Music." I survived that experience, and we ended up hanging out that night. We became really great friends, and I took some lessons with him. I think his recording on *Drumology* might be the last recorded performance that he ever did, but he was at the top of his game. He and I went into a studio in Florida, and I got the opportunity to produce him, he did three takes, then we took the tracks home and I edited together a final take. We were honored that John liked the track so much that he began using it in his clinics around the world.

From left: Matt Bollinger, Tracy Silverman, Eric Marienthal, Michael Silverman, and Rob Silverman

MS: Rob might not even remember this, but years ago I played keyboards with John at a clinic in St. Louis. We played Chick Corea's "Spain," and it was a thrill. During his clinic, he mentioned that one of his biggest drumming influences growing up in the 80s was playing the parts that were created with drum machines. His bass drum foot was super precise, and every note

was exactly the same, just like a machine. I was thinking about that when I composed "Drum Duet in C Minor."

MD: Speaking of drum duets, tell us about the next tune on the record with Casey Adams.

RS: Casey is a consummate professional drummer who can play with anybody and play anything. Jay Oliver wrote that track and it is called "Inferno." Jay, Casey and I are always hanging out and having fun together, and Jay has (sort of) mentored us. Jay was kind enough to write a song for me and Casey.

MS: Actually it was written and inspired by an older tune that Jay wrote with Dave Weckl back in 1990 called "Tower of Inspiration," (originally featured on the *Master Plan* album). So for fun, our working title was "Tower-ish," which later became "Towering Inferno" which became "Inferno." It's a typical Jay Oliver fusion masterpiece. His writing with Dave Weckl over the years has been a huge influence on my own writing so working with him on these albums is pretty seamless.

RS: Eric Marienthal played sax on it, along with Larry Kornfeld giving us a great bass track. Eric, by the way, played on every tune from the first *Drumology* record, and of course John Patitucci has been an important figure in the *Drumology* series as well.

MD: *Drumology 2* is being released this month, correct?

MS: Yes, it will be available by the time this MD issue is released! The first song we wrote had lots of those anthemic Styx type of keyboard melodies combined with fusion…

RS: So we called Todd Sucherman, the tune was just a natural fit for him. He's one of those guys who can do anything. We sent him the track and when we got it back the mix and playing was absolutely perfect. We asked him to play anything he wanted to play, and he did. The one thing that made his track different is when we were trading, he went first. All of his trades sounded like drum ideas that needed a musical response, like a question and an answer. He was so intuitive to what the song needed - it was perfect.

MD: Mike Mangini and the song "Victory" was next, how did that one go down?

RS: I have a friend that *claimed* he knew Mike and John Myung, and though I was skeptical, I wrote up a proposal, and he sent it to them, and shockingly… He actually DID know Mike and John from Dream Theater. Even more shockingly, they were up for recording! After Mike heard the song, he actually got involved with composing it. He made some suggestions and changed some stuff around. He got very involved and actually rewrote one of the melodies. He helped with production and was just incredible. Mike played through the entire song and I had to decide what parts to replace and play with or instead of him. That was a tough process - every note he played was pure genius!

MS: Once we got Todd and Mike to do their tracks for *Drumology 2,* we decided that Volume 2 would be more of a progressive rock record instead of

more of a fusion record. The first *Drumology* was a very jazz-fusion, saxophone, and keyboard-oriented sound. The second one became much more guitar oriented, with a rock feel throughout.

MD: "Timber Falls" features Kenny Aronoff, who we usually don't associate with a very progressive approach, but he can do it. I'm sure that was a fun track for him to stretch out on.

RS: And speaking of guitar, Dweezil Zappa played on that track too. Again, Kenny went in and recorded the entire tune, and then with some creative editing, I added my parts. We also traded on it as well. There were lots of peaks and valleys in that tune and Kenny played them perfectly.

MD: With someone like Kenny who has done everything from The Smashing Pumpkins to John Fogerty to Joe Satriani how did you go about writing a tune for him?

RS: This particular song existed before we knew that Kenny would play on it.

MS: I thought it would be a good tune for Kenny because it has two different meters. One is a triplet thing, and one is a straight rock thing. And it switches back and forth between the two feels. As a studio drummer, I know that Kenny is very used to playing pretty straight tunes, so I didn't want to throw any heavy fusion at him.

Felipe Laverde

MD: But believe me, if you did, he would have killed it. He can play very busy if you ask him to. He's got a Billy Cobham hat hidden somewhere in the back of his closet.

MS: You're right! He's one of the most recorded drummers out there, and it's because he can do anything! It was a thrill to hear him play a really nice, wide-open solo. He's really not known for that, but it was an incredible solo.

MD: And speaking of Billy Cobham, you created the song "Sea Spray" for him to play.

RS: I wrote a long letter to Billy and explained the whole project, I didn't think he'd do it.

MS: The reason we had the nerve to ask Billy was because it was during the pandemic. We gambled on the idea that he and other top drummers, might like to do some studio work, and the gamble paid off. Billy is a unique talent, and it might have been impossible to get his attention in normal times!

RS: For "Sea Spray" we wanted to reunite Billy and Jerry Goodman and write something that was a 21st Century version of the sound of Mahavishnu Orchestra.

MS: I created a through-composed section with a whole lot of unpredictable angles and a wide- open solo section. Those are the two things that you can typically expect in Mahavishnu or Weather Report type of music. The melody had a bunch of tricky accents, I wrote it with Jerry Goodman in mind.

RS: We were surprised by what Billy played. I was expecting funky stuff with obtuse backbeats, but instead what he played was a main groove with the snare drum as the main sound. It is kind of a marching rudimental type thing. That was eye-opening. Then I went back and did the hi hat and the backbeats over his intricate snare drum work. We created a cool double drummer thing.

MD: Casey Grillo from Queensryche was next.

RS: Yes, but he used to play in a prog band called Kamelot, and we have known each other for years. I brought Casey and John Spinelli (of Spinelli free floating drums) into the studio and had them play freely to a click track, and then I composed a song around what they played. John and Casey have different styles that somehow work perfectly together. I had no preconception as to what we would compose, but that track might be my favorite tune from the record. They gave me such nice stuff to work with, Casey is a double bass master, and he created some great stuff for us to write over. John played his huge sounding Spinelli custom drums and gave it a huge backbeat and big Rock fills. We created this classical shred song that needed some guitar and we wondered who would be a perfect fit?

MS: Besides Yngwie (of course.)

RS: John called Michael Angelo Batio, and he took it to another level. Larry Kornfeld played bass and did some wonderful unison melodic parts with M.A.B. Actually, Larry played bass on most of the tunes on *Drumology 2* and *3* and was the recording engineer for most of my tracking sessions. I couldn't have done this without him.

MD: The next tune features *Modern Drummer's* owner David Frangioni, how did that happen?

RS: David is a fantastic drummer who shares so many of the same influences as me. David and I did a podcast about *Drumology* together. Afterwards we stayed on ZOOM and started talking about studios, and drumming, and we found out that we had a lot in common. He invited me over to see his drum collection at The Modern Drummer Hall of Fame Museum and I wrote a song based around the experience of going to the museum and being surrounded by all of those iconic drumsets. The tune "Drum Dreams" was the result. The tune was based on the idea of dreaming to play on all of your drum hero's drumsets. He did his drum tracks at the Hit Factory in Miami, and they came out great. We made a video for the tune, and you get to see us playing all of these famous iconic drumsets. It was a dream come true in so many ways. David is one of my really good friends now. We are like drum brothers!

MD: The last drummer on *Drumology 2* is Glen Sobel who I saw recently with Alice Cooper, and he was tearing it up. I'm so glad that you included him.
RS: What he does with Alice is amazing. The drumming, the theatrics, he is masterful. But he also does so much more. Glen is actually on *Volume 2* and *3*. Glen's first track is called "Moving Mountains." We reunited Glen with his old friend (and guitarist extraordinaire) Jennifer Batten for a tune that will be on *Drumology 3*. After that track was done, I asked Glen to play some eight measure solo phrases over a click. It was some of the greatest rock drumming segments that I had ever heard. But I couldn't figure out how to use them in the tune. I knew that I didn't want to leave them on the cutting room floor, so I devised a plan to write a mellow tune that evolved slowly, like you were climbing up a mountain. By the time it got to the end (or the top of the mountain,) we would have Glen playing these amazing eight bar phrases. The tune started off sort of Pink Floyd-ish and soundtrack-ish. It starts off mellow and by the end it leaves you exhausted.

MD: Isn't there a special tune that includes three drummers?
RS: Vinnie and Carmine Appice and me. I wondered what it would be like to be the third member of their *Drum Wars* concept, and we called Vinnie. I asked them to create a tom groove that we could do something with, and they came up with a great one. Vinnie did a whole Korg Wavedrum section in the tune, and Vinnie arranged and wrote an entire chart with specific sections for all of us to play. Then Michael fleshed it out with a little bit of everything: guitars, bass, organ, choirs…Matt Bollinger from Bach to the Future played bass.
MS: It sounds like an Ozzy Osbourne instrumental!
RS: I think it's important to mention that one of the reasons that many of these drummers agreed to do this project was because of our association with the Neil Peart Cancer Research Fund. All of the proceeds from *Drumology 1, Drumology 2,* and *Drumology 3* (which will be out this fall,) go towards that fund, which is very near and dear to our hearts.
MD: Who is on *Drumology 3*?
RS: The centerpiece of that record is a tune written and produced by Jay Oliver reuniting the entire Chick Corea Elektric Band (sadly, without Chick himself.) This one is quite special and was written as a triple drummer epic with Dave Weckl, Steve Gadd, and myself all playing together. That tune alone took years of coordination. Jay Oliver was in his glory putting it all together with audio and video, and Dave Weckl was integral in everything as well. I'll have to admit, I took a back seat to Dave and Jay on that tune, they steered the ship, and I hung on for dear life!

Jay had mentioned that the concept for the tune was partially inspired by the amazing piece that Chick wrote for the *Master Plan* album, later to become the title cut, "Master Plan." At the time it was an innovative double-drummer piece that featured both Dave and his drum hero, Steve Gadd. Dave is my drum hero, so we have three generations of drum heroes. It was a "pinch me" sort of moment. One by one, each of the guys from the Elektric Band agreed to play. Dave actually wrote out parts for Steve and me to play which was handy because this tune was a monster!

Maybe the greatest perk was that we were all able to fly out to Phoenix and be in the room when Gadd did his tracking session. We brought along a video crew as well. Of course, we were psyched that he did most of his legacy Gadd licks on this tune which was so cool! We even got to interview him. *Modern Drummer* is going to put that interview video out at some point.
MD: Who else is on *Drumology 3*?
RS: Our violinist Tracy Silverman has a separate project with Roy "Futureman" Wooten from Bela Fleck and the Flecktones. He is the master of the Zendrum Drumitar, an instrument that I play as well. In fact, I might have played more gigs on Zendrum than on drumset in my career.
MD: For those that don't know, what is a Zendrum Drumitar?
RS: It is an electronic percussion instrument that you wear like a guitar. You play it with your fingers; it is a touch sensitive midi controller that you can attach to any sound source or computer. Roy "Futureman" Wooten invented that instrument and is my inspiration.

We asked Roy to play on a tune, and to our surprise, not only did he agree, he brought in his brother Victor Wooten! That just fueled our fire, and so we then asked Bela Fleck if he would be interested. And HE agreed too! Mike wrote a very Bela Fleck type of tune, Roy went above and beyond to create a cool drum part, Victor played a masterful bass part, and Bela took it to another planet.
MS: I composed the tune based on the Fibonacci Series of numbers where each number is the sum of the previous two. These numbers are found throughout nature. Roy is very into numbers, so I thought that he might appreciate that, and he did. And we named the tune

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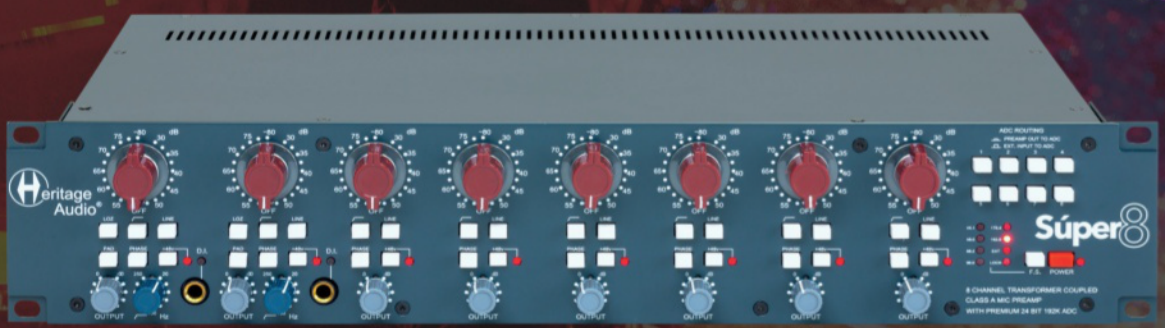

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RS: We also have the previously mentioned tune with guitarist Jennifer Batten (Michael Jackson, Jeff Beck) and Glen Sobel. Eric Mariental and Larry Kornfeld play on that tune as well.

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When I was at the last NAMM show, I stopped into the Baked Potato and drummer Gergo Borlai was playing there, and I was floored. We had to have Gergo on Drumology 3, and we brought guitarist Jaime Kime to play on a tune called "Jaco's Dream." Jamie and Gergo knew each other, so there was already some chemistry there. For these tunes we are always looking for chemistry, and it's always nice to include musicians that already knew each other.

MD: How did you find the space to add any other drumming to Gergo's tracks? He can really fill up a lot of space.

RS: Oh man, Gergo's tracks are amazing, he's quite a talent, and a true pro. There was a lot of creative editing on his tracks to create a drumming dialog, that's one of the best parts about working on these *Drumology* records.

MD: And then there's Gavin Harrison, another amazing drummer on *Drumology*.

RS: Right. Jay Oliver had brought up Gavin Harrison's name. He had known of Gavin from Steve Orkin's Drum Fantasy Camp. I'm also a big fan of his from the band Porcupine Tree. So Jay wrote a tune called "Sevenish," that cleverly jumps between 4 and 7, and even 6 in some spots. Jay is really influenced by Celtic music and one his heroes is Bill Whelan who composed the *Riverdance* soundtrack, so the melody has that Celtic feel, but in 7/8 if you can imagine that! On the original demo Jay laid down a reference midi drum part, which blew our minds. It was so realistic and cool. In fact, a little aside, Jay is coming out with an app for musicians that will be a game changer for every drummer. Seriously. After sending the demo to Gavin, I wanted to give him free rein to create a drum part that was unique to him. To our surprise he came up with an awesome double drum part that involved interlocking grooves crossing over the bar line in seven. He recorded both parts and panned them to each side. I chose one of the parts, replacing his reference track. It was easier said than done! But the end result is us playing this super groovy interlocking groove in seven, and it came out great.

MD: And the last tune is called "Sailing."

RS: Yes. The last tune was done with the great percussionist Gumbi

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MODERN DRUMMER

Ortiz. We have run into Gumbi on and off for years through opening for Al DiMeola, and through hearing Gumbi's own fusion band in the Tampa area. We got St. Louis drummer Jamie Brauner and Gumbi to play on this beachy vocal tune written by singer/songwriter Paul Molkenbur that features a whole latin percussion section. Then Gumbi composed and performed a big breakdown section that he sings and plays on, and it's just brilliant. The bass was done by Jimi Blake who I play in a Latin/funk project with.

Casey Adams returns for *Volume 3* as well playing the tune "Falcon 9." He plays the first tune on *Volume 1* and the last tune on *Volume 3*. Casey is my best friend, and we bounce everything off of each other such as our love for Rush's music and studying and improving as drummers.

MD: What have you learned through these collaborations with all of these legendary drummers?

RS:When I get the raw tracks from each drummer, I get to hear the true sound of their drums. All of their drums sound very different. I get to hear what each of these drummers would send to a well-known artist if they were working for them. And I get to hear what their drums would sound like *BEFORE* they are mixed and produced. Some guys even labeled what mics they used on each drum. It was just so interesting to hear all of the different ways a drum set can sound.

MD: That's what makes this an art form. There are so many different "answers to the question" of how a drum set should sound, or how to create music, or what should or shouldn't be played on a drum track.

RS: These are human beings, and believe me, everything I got wasn't "perfect."

MD: Thank God!

RS: For instance, I got to hear all different versions of what great drummers consider to be a "perfect" bass drum sound. The same with snare drums. Some snare drums were much lower in pitch than I thought they would be. I learned that they did that because of how the snare would sit in the mix if it was a little lower in pitch. It was always cool to see what questions each drummer would ask. Some would ask about the tempos, and some would ask about bit rate. It is just interesting to see how each guy prefers to work.

MD: Another thing that makes this an art and not a science, is that there is no absolute "right" way to do anything. It's what works, it's personal preference.

MS: It was interesting to hear how all of these A-list drummers could have such different touches on the drums too. For instance, Steve Smith played powerfully, but much lighter than I thought he would. In contrast to that, the Appice drummers play right through the drums. It's liberating to see that a drummer can "just" be himself, and it's fine. Like you said, it's all about what works.

MD: What I think defines art, is that the end *DOES* justify the means. If it sounds good, it is good. Yet what sounds "good" is always very subjective.

RS: I agree.

MD: How did you decide what to play on these tracks after hearing what the guest had recorded?

RS: It was a lot like when you hear a song, and you improvise a different part on the song based on what you would have played on that song. After listening to their tracks for a long time, I would replace different drum sections of songs based on what I would like to hear on the track. But it could get tricky.

MD: Double drumming is such an interesting (and hard) approach, and there are so many ways to do it, how did you approach it? Did you play complimentary parts, or did you try to create unison drum parts?

RS: We had a few different approaches. The parts where the guest and I were playing in unison were usually in the final stretch of the song, where the energy was at its highest point. It was like playing along with a record of your drumming hero. Then there were times where it was a dialog back and forth. The third way was when

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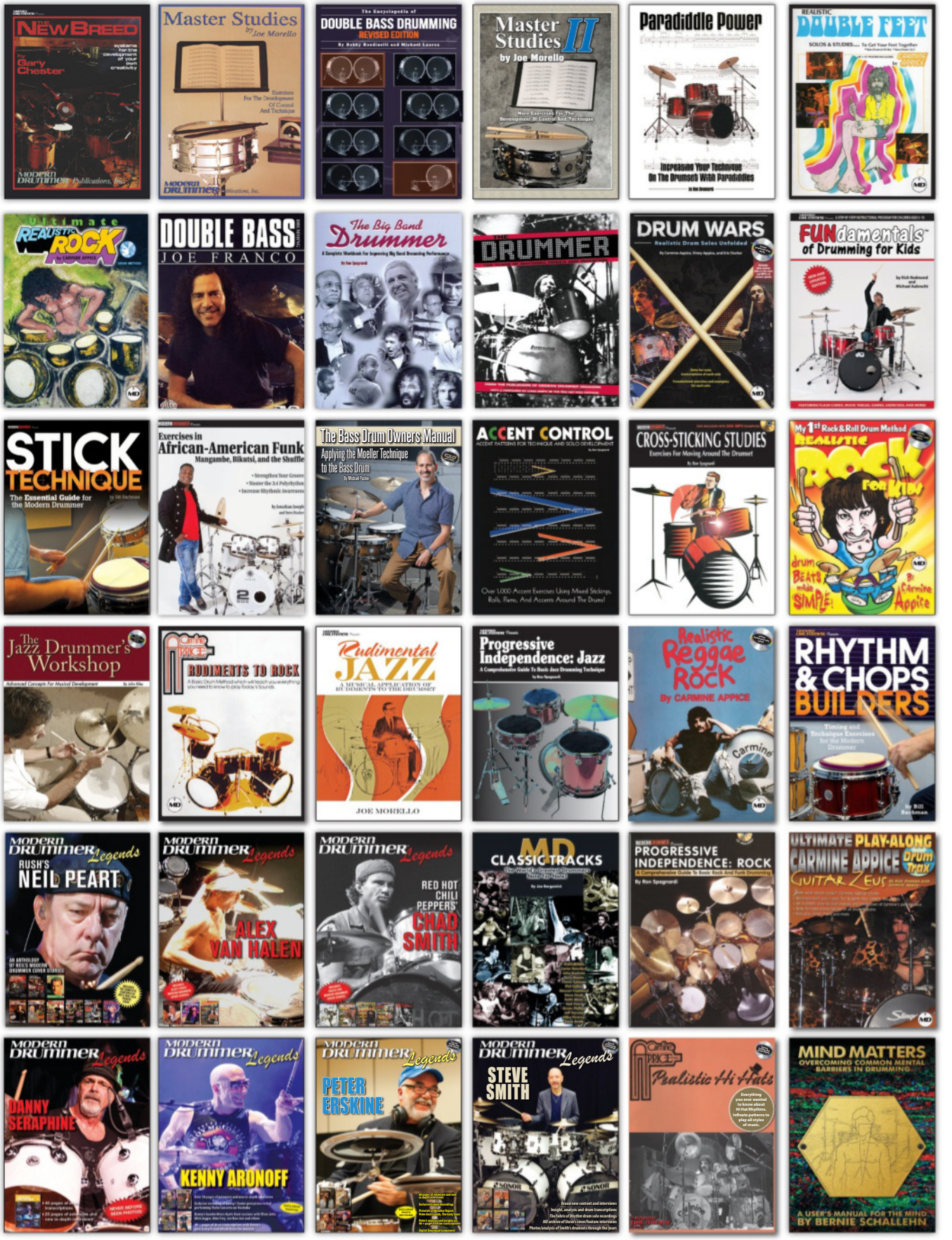

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both of us were playing interlocking parts that created a singular groove that works for the song. That was actually inspired by Dom Famularo's book *Drumset Duets.*

MD: My double drumming bibles are the John Tropea record *Live at Mikell's* with Steve Gadd and Rick Marotta. It's great because they are finishing each other ideas and fitting together like peanut butter and jelly. Another is Joe Cocker *Organic* with Jim Keltner and Kenny Aronoff. Of course, the standard (for me) is Joe Cocker *Mad Dogs and Englishmen* with Jim Keltner, Jim Gordon, and Chuck Blackwell. But I can't tell you enough how interesting it is to hear about how you have turned double drumming into a genre of music. What do you look for when you are selecting drummers for the *Drumology* records?

RS: It's an emotional choice for me. It's because I'm a fan of their body of work. These are drummers that have touched me, influenced me, and with whom I feel an emotional bond. That bond usually comes from the music that I have heard them play. However, there are a few (like Gergo,) that I haven't listened to a whole lot, but who are just ridiculously good and HAD to be included.

MD: You guys also run a record label called Autumn Hill records.

MS: We are the largest streaming independent instrumental music label in the world. We have 950 albums available, and stream about 3 million tracks a day. The last few years have focused on jazz and jazz-fusion. We also produce some live jazz festivals as well.

Autumn Hill has recently signed the Dave Weckl Band, released Tom Kennedy's solo album, Gary Meeks' record, and we're in talks with Jay Oliver for him to do a solo album. He's a hard one to crack but we're working on him! Jeff Lorber and myself put out a record together, I also just did a record with Eric Marienthal. Both John Pattitucci and Eric Marienthal have put out records on our label too.

RS: Michael is too modest to say so, but he is the most streamed solo pianist in the world, with 14 number one albums on Apple Music.

MD: Lastly, what drums and cymbals are you using on all of these records?

RS: I am a Yamaha artist, I have a few of their kits and I love the PHX drums, I play Sabian Cymbals, and I have a huge gong collection. The gongs find their way onto most of my records.

About 30 years ago I was reading *Modern Drummer* and I saw an ad for the Zendrum Drumitar, and I got one. It has become my other main instrument. There is about 1,000 Zendrummers in the world, we have a FaceBook group, it's a real thing. I am also an official endorser for the Zendrum.

MD: Who haven't you been able to get for *Drumology* yet? Here is your chance to put the call out to the drum world. Who would you like to include on *Drumology 4*?

RS: Will Kennedy, Dom Famularo, Jonathan Mover, Bobby Blotzer, Dennis Chambers, Thomas Pridgen, Mike Mitchell is an amazing gospel chops drummer, Nicko McBrain, Eric Moore, Tico Torres has agreed to do a track. That's a good sampler of who I'm hoping to get.

MD: Your phone should start ringing soon!

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Dirk Verbeuren:

The Drumming, the Legacy... and Megadeth

By Mark Griffith

Dirk Verbeuren is a musical veteran and great drummer with a lot of knowledge to share. His drumming was first heard with bands such as Aborted and Sybreed. He co-founded Scarve, a forward thinking death metal band which released four albums and toured Europe extensively. Verbeuren's fine-tuned ear, impeccable musical memory, sensitivity to structure, and ability to read and write rhythms, made him a highly in-demand session drummer nearly overnight. In 2004, Verbeuren joined the Swedish melodic death metal band Soilwork with whom he recorded and toured worldwide for twelve years. He also managed to find time to record and/or perform with a multitude of established artists, including Danzig, Testament, Sasami Ashworth, Devin Townsend, Fredrik Thordendal, At The Gates, and Satyricon. A long-term collaboration with Swedish software company Toontrack has resulted in the Library of the Extreme, the first ever collection of MIDI metal beats and fills.

In May 2016, Verbeuren was asked to take the drum throne for Megadeth. A few months later, band leader Dave Mustaine officially announced Dirk Verbeuren as the new permanent drummer of Megadeth. Today, Verbeuren has made his recording debut with Megadeth, and he actually co-wrote two songs for *The Sick, the Dying… and the Dead!* The band's sixteenth studio album is slated for release in September 2022. As you will read, Dirk takes this gig and Megadeth's musical and drumming legacy, VERY seriously. He is the perfect drummer for Megadeth, and *The Sick, the Dying… and the Dead!* proves that fact.

Verbeuren also runs Die Crawling Studio, which incorporates the most recent innovations developed by Roland and Toontrack, as well as Northwood Sound Studios. Dirk has been a teacher since 1995. He offers in-person and online drum lessons sharing techniques, exercises, and career advice to a growing community of drum students. Now we can all be students of his depth of knowledge and deep insights into drumming and music.

Jarrod Anthonee

MD: Can you tell me about your musical background?
DV: I'm from Belgium, and both of my parents were music lovers. They listened to mostly classical music, rock, and pop. My dad played guitar and my mom played piano, and they both sang a little bit. There was always music around our house. At a young age I chose to play the violin and played that for several years.
MD: Did you choose the violin, or was that the instrument they wanted you to play?
DV: I have asked them that, and apparently, that was the instrument that I chose to play at the tender age of six. Growing up hearing a lot of classical music must have influenced my decision. When I was 12 or 13 years old, my family moved to Paris, and that's where I discovered the realm of metal music. I had some friends who were into a lot of underground stuff, and we started trading tapes, and that's how I discovered thrash metal and bands like Megadeth.
MD: That's a pretty big jump from classical music to thrash metal. Was there anything in-between?
DV: As a kid, I listened a lot to the music of the 80's. I really loved Prince and *Purple Rain*, and my dad had Beatles, Stones, and Zeppelin records, and I loved all of that. I was always following whatever was popular at the time. Then techno and hip-hop became popular and I really started getting into that. Bands like Run-DMC and the Beastie Boys were very beat driven. Beastie Boys' *Licensed to Ill* became very influential to me, as did *Paul's Boutique* and Run-DMC's *Raising Hell*. I believe that my interest in rhythm originally came from hip-hop. If you listen to those early Run-DMC and LL Cool J records, their entire foundation is great beats. Those beats were so important to the whole vibe. A few years later, as I got into metal drumming, that original inspiration evolved into what I am still doing today.
MD: Since you mentioned *Licensed to Ill*, I'll mention a band that Rick Rubin produced called Trouble Funk. They were a Washington DC go-go band, and Rick produced an album of theirs called Trouble Funk *Live*. So many of the samples on *Licensed to Ill* came from that Trouble Funk *Live* record. When you hear Trouble Funk, which was an amazing band on their own, you'll hear all of the original recordings of some of those ridiculous grooves-samples from *Licensed to Ill*.
DV: That's pretty cool! I'll have to check them out. Thanks for the tip! That was a great time for sampling. The early Public Enemy and Beastie Boys records used an incredible array of great samples in a really cool and creative way. Then you would be listening to other music and hear a beat, a vocal or a sound, and recognize it from *Fear of a Black Planet* or *Paul's Boutique*.
MD: What was your first metal gig?
DV: My parents were incredibly supportive of my passion for this

Cameron Nuez

crazy extreme music and allowed me to enroll in the school (now known as) Music Academy International. I co-founded a band called Scarve with Patrick Martin because we had similar band patches on our jackets, so I knew we were both into the same types of music. That was my first band that involved songwriting, touring, and releasing records. At the same time, I also started working with other artists, filling in for other drummers, recording and touring with various bands. I sort of became a session drummer without even realizing it. All of that combined was my launching pad to becoming a professional musician. I learned to work in different settings and spent time getting better on my instrument, which eventually brought me to where I am today. In 2004 the manager for Scarve's label Listenable Records told me that Soilwork (another band on the label) was looking for a drummer. I did a few tours with them and eventually joined the band. Although I had invested a lot of blood, sweat and tears into Scarve, joining Soilwork was the next logical step for my career. I recorded a bunch of records with Soilwork including *Stabbing the Drama, Sworn to a Great Divide, The Panic Broadcast, The Living Infinite,* and *The Ride Majestic*. We toured a lot, and that's what brought me to the attention of Dave Mustaine and the opportunity to join Megadeth in 2016. I had already moved to the US in 2006, first living in Los Angeles, then in Ohio for a few years, and then back to L.A., permanently this time.

MD: How did the original call from Dave Mustaine happen?

DV: While I was on tour with Soilwork, I got a call from Megadeth's management. They were looking for a drummer who could fill in for some shows, and several people in Dave's entourage had recommended me. After a nice phone call with Dave, I studied the Megadeth set to learn the songs I didn't already know, and 10 days later, in May of 2016, I did my first gig at Rock on the Range in Columbus, Ohio. I can't say that I saw Dave's call coming in the least. I had seen Megadeth in 1990 as a kid, and it still amazes me to think that all these years later, I'm now a member of the band.

MD: So how does a guy that grew up playing violin, listening to Prince, Run-DMC, Public Enemy, and The Beastie Boys approach playing thrash metal with Megadeth?

DV: There were a few key records and players that converted my musical brain. I remember hearing *Reign in Blood* by Slayer for the first time. That really rocked my world because I didn't understand what was going on musically, but I was super into the sound and the drumming. I knew that whatever this is, I love it. The same thing happened when I heard *Scum* from Napalm Death. When that first came out it had a sticker on it that said, "the world's fastest band." I bought it immediately, but when I put it on, I didn't understand any of it. I actually wanted to return the LP, but instead I listened to it non-stop for the next year. Now it's one of my favorite all-time records. That was back in the day when you would listen to an entire record, you didn't just skip around and look for your favorite tracks or solos. You would absorb the whole thing. The drummers from those two records, Dave Lombardo from Slayer and Mick Harris from Napalm Death, along with Pete Sandoval from Morbid Angel and Terrorizer, are my prime influences for starting to play metal. The energy and the excitement of that music and that fast, intense drumming really spoke to me. It was new and fresh, and very few people around me were into it, so that created this sense of belonging to a scene that was "mine".

Dave Lombardo from Slayer and Mick Harris from Napalm Death, along with Pete Sandoval from Morbid Angel and Terrorizer, are my prime influences for starting to play metal.

MD: I have heard that point of hearing a style of music for the first time and not understanding it, but knowing that you liked it and wanting to learn more about it, from lots of great drummers and musicians. Can you explain that?

DV: I often talk to my students about that. In the end, music is about what you feel. That's the whole point of it: we play to make someone feel a certain way. If you want to study it, understand it, and learn the technical side of music and how it's put together, that's cool. But it's not a necessity. You can dig into the beats or the scales, but there is something to be said for an instinctual approach. I think that's something that you have to remember as you dig deeper into any style of music. I have a grindcore project called Bent Sea, that I do on the side because I grew up with that style and I love playing fast. When I create the tunes, I start with improvising drums, then I improvise guitar parts over that. I am playing whatever speaks to me at that very moment. In some ways, it's completely the opposite of traditional songwriting. That can be really scary sometimes, but it can also yield amazing results. Sometimes I listen back and can't believe what just came out of me.

MD: When you first got the Megadeth gig, you said that you studied their music to learn the set. How did you study their music?

DV: Throughout my years of playing sessions and in different bands, I have really perfected my system of charting out songs. The first step is (obviously) listening to the songs a lot, over and over. I do a sort of active listening where I am really paying attention to the structure of the songs. I will chart out the structure of the song, and the beats that go with each section. I will do the same for any of the fills that I think are important. Then I will take those charts to the kit. At first, I'll play a song seven or eight times in a row and try to nail all the big and little things that I have charted out. It's a very trial and error type of thing in the beginning.

With Megadeth, there were songs like "Symphony of Destruction" and "Hangar 18" that I had played as a kid doing covers with my friends, so I already basically knew them. But there were new songs that I had never played, and those took some time to learn. As someone who does this for a living, I can say that you have to get good at picking up new songs very quickly. You're going to miss gigs if you can't learn songs quickly. When I filled in with Satyricon, I had two days to learn their entire set, and that was generally more complex music than Megadeth. So, to have 10 days to learn the Megadeth set before the first (and only) rehearsal might seem like not a long time, but it actually felt pretty comfortable.

MD: After hearing the new record, I have to say that you sound very comfortable playing this music. But the first thing that I noticed when I heard the new record was the drum sound. It's a very natural drum sound that is very un-thrash-metal-like, and the snare drum sound is amazing!

DV: Most of the record is my signature Tama snare that I have been using for several years. It's a SLP Bronze shelled 5 ½ by 14 drum.

MD: It sounds fantastic. It's resonant and very warm. I can tell that you used that drum on the songs "The Sick, the Dying… and the Dead!" and "We'll Be Back."

DV: Yes, I believe that's my snare on those two tracks. We tracked at Blackbird Studios in Nashville, and they have an incredible stable of Keplingers, so of course I had to use one of those on a few songs. I think there is a mandatory Black Beauty on there too, but my signature drum made most of the record. I used the SLP Dynamic Bronze on Soilwork's *The Ride Majestic* too, before turning that snare into my signature model.

MD: Let's go through the tracks for the new record. "The Sick, the Dying… and the Dead!" has a nice sparse but a HUGE groove. It's not the type of drumming that I would expect from Megadeth.

DV: As I recall it, my approach to that song was to support the riffs and provide a nice driving feel. It didn't need me to go all out and create a complex drum part.

MD: How do you create drum parts and specific grooves?

DV: The first question I ask myself is: what is my place in the song? What do I need to bring to it? That really varies from song to song. With Megadeth, I take into account the history of the band and the drummers that helped write it. I really spent time studying the drum parts of Gar Samuelson, Nick Menza, and Chuck Behler. Those are the guys that created the legacy of the Megadeth drumming sound and style. Their work informed my approach to creating my parts for the new album. Of course, there's some of me in there as well. But as a fan of the band first, I know what I would expect to hear from Megadeth drumming if I picked up a new record, so I kept that in mind. Gar came from a jazz-fusion background, and he could also lay down a really solid old-school groove. Nick Menza played somewhat more sparsely and had a really strong attack. Nick's parts were always very well thought out. I was sort of thinking of his approach for the title track.

The band really reached its first peaks with the records *Peace Sells.. but Who's Buying,* with Gar, and *Rust in Peace* with Nick. Those two records hit the scene pretty hard and they're the defining records that I still look to today. I was fortunate to tour for three years playing all those classics before we did any sort of songwriting or recording together.

MD: How loose does Dave let you get with the drum parts from previous recordings, and how closely does he want you to stick to the recorded parts?

DV: He was super cool about that from the very beginning. There were a few things that I hadn't heard correctly, and we fixed them over time. After I was in the band for a little while and getting more comfortable, he suggested that I go back to the original recordings and really study them to hear the details that I maybe hadn't originally heard. He had all the drum tracks sent to me so I could hear them without the music. I discovered various things that were maybe somewhat buried in the mix, so I went back and redid my charts with more detail and memorized everything I had previously missed. Of course, there's always some of my interpretation of any older drum part that is "mine," and Dave's cool with that. I focus the most on really trying to simulate the FEEL of the songs.

MD: It's refreshing to hear that you have really worked to learn the history of the drumming approach in the band, and how it fits into the legacy of Megadeth.

DV: That's because the drum parts are really essential to the overall sound. For example, the way a drummer plays the hi-hat is (to me) a defining element. Hats are very expressive and personal. Nick Menza played them differently from the way I naturally play them. I really try to bring a bit of Nick's feel by adjusting the way I attack the hi-hat on songs like "Trust" and "Symphony of Destruction."

MD: What were some other things you heard when you heard those solo drum tracks?

DV: Sometimes it was cymbal stuff. There are certain cymbals that stand out in the mix; however, you can easily miss a cymbal that's a bit more subtle or that's being played where you weren't expecting it, for example.

Gar's parts were recorded with boomier drum sounds, and because of that, there are details that can be hard to discern. There is a beat I call "The Gar Beat" where the snare is on the beat and the kick drum is on the second and fourth sixteenth note (E and A). It's used in songs like "The Conjuring" and "Peace Sells". Early on, I mistook that for a standard double kick beat with the bass drums playing all of the sixteenth notes, because it was hard to hear what Gar was playing in the original mix. I was doing it wrong until someone in the band alerted me to it. Those are the types of things that make drummers unique. The devil is in the details.

Every drummer has a natural groove. These days, when mostly everyone is playing to a click, that groove can sometimes get a little lost. I understand the reasons for using a click, especially from the producing and engineering side. But there's something to be said for playing tunes together in a room, doing full takes, like Megadeth did on Youthanasia. It adds that extra pizazz that I find lacking in some current-day recordings.

MD: Let's get back to the new record. On "Life in Hell" you play some nice breaks that leave some space. I don't usually notice space in speed metal drumming. I also like how you set up the transition to the half-time feel. That might be my favorite track on the record.

DV: When I was younger and in bands like Scarve, my modus operandi was often to fill up every space. Now, I'm trying to play more for the song, to lay a solid foundation.

"Life in Hell" was actually a song that I composed and brought to the band. Dave had asked us to contribute, so I brought that demo in and Dave added his swagger. He made the riffs much better. Of course, I'm no Dave Mustaine on the guitar- no one can play like him! He's a genius when it comes to that. I'm glad that you heard all that stuff on "Life in Hell" because I'm really proud that that song made it onto the record.

MD: I swear I didn't know that was your tune. The advance version of

the record that I got didn't have any songwriting credits on it.
DV: There are a lot of little drum details that I have to learn, for when we play it live.
MD: So it's not only other people's drum parts that you have to learn, but sometimes you have to learn your own drum parts from a recording. People never talk about that.
DV: True! I was listening to the record and thought "*Damn, I'm going to have to figure out how I did that!*"
MD: How do you (not the band) write?
DV: Some people say that they need to wait for inspiration to come.

MD: Was this record done with a click?
DV: Yes, but we use a dynamic click. That means the click speeds up and slows down at certain sections of a tune. Making the dynamic click feel natural is another drumming skill that you now need to have. A lot of playing with a click has to do with learning how to play not only "with" or "on" the click, but "around" it.
MD: Do you guys play live with a click?
DV: Yes, mostly because of the video content that's happening during our show. The video makes the click necessary. But we do have a great deal of dynamic clicks live too. We adapt the album

Cameron Nuez

I understand what they mean, but personally, I like to think that I can write at the spur of the moment. If I'm feeling excited about music and I have a few hours, I can sit down and write something. It doesn't always yield a good result. Sometimes I'll listen back a few days later, and just say "*nope*!" But other times I'll think, "*Yeah, I can do something with this.*" Then I'll spend some more time on it. But it really comes down to making time for it. Life tends to be consuming, and there's always something going on. So if you keep pushing the writing away for whenever things aren't busy, it's rarely going to happen. I just carve out a little time here and there to record some beats, put some riffs on top of them, and see what happens. I do play some guitar. I probably wouldn't play it in a live setting, as I don't consider myself a "guitarist" in the proper sense of the word, but I can play enough to write and record. And in the case of "Life in Hell" I was trying to write a good old-school Megadeth song.

tempos for the stage. For instance, a song like "A Tout Le Monde" is sped up when we play it live, compared to the album version. Whenever we introduce a new tune or a tune that hasn't been played live for a long time, we spend time finding the right tempos, tweaking them during soundcheck. It's an intricate process, but it makes for great live show where everything is played at the optimal tempo.
MD: Any tips for playing to a click live?
DV: Don't have it too loud. I keep mine just above the point where I can't hear it. That way if I'm on, I can't really hear it, and if I get off slightly, I can adjust back and make it unnoticeable. I use the click as a guideline more than anything else. I rely on my inner tempo. But it's also good for those days where you have a ton of energy, and you feel like playing everything 20 bpm faster. The click is there to remind you to chill.

MD: What click sound do you like?
DV: I use the Cubase beeps. Most people hate those, but I'm used to them, and they work great for me. I tried a cowbell sound, but it doesn't cut through the volume of my drumming enough.
MD: Is the whole band hearing the click? Or just you?
DV: Everyone hears it. Recently I also started slating, which is recording myself saying the song title at the start of each count-off. That way, if anything ever goes wrong, I know what song is being counted in. Because as we all know, no matter how prepared you are, things can go wrong. Dave always makes sure we address anything and everything we can think of during pre-production, so everyone that spends their hard-earned money to come and see Megadeth gets a KILLER show!
MD: Your internal balance on the entire new record is really wonderful. I know the record is mixed and produced, but it sounds like if I was in the room hearing you track, it would have sounded very natural and sort of "pre-mixed" coming directly from the drums.
DV: Wow! I'm glad that you heard that. I have respect for all types of production and mixing, but for me, the best records are the ones that sound just like you said, like you are in the room listening to the performances. Every time I go into the studio, I try to achieve that. I realize sometimes it's not what a project requires, and other times it's simply not what the artist or producer wants. But *IF* there is a possibility, I usually push for that. We spent a lot of time on this record to get a natural drum sound. A lot of it comes from consistency in volume and attack. But I like to play dynamically, and I use a great deal of contrast and things like ghost notes in my grooves. Some of that can really get lost if it's not recorded, mixed, or treated properly. Dave and Chris Rakestraw (co-producer of the record) and I talked about that extensively, so I'm glad it stood out to you.
MD: You also get a nice cymbal sound and have a nice touch as well.
DV: I try to play with a lot of dynamics. I think a lot of swing comes from dynamics. When I was discovering extreme drumming and developing my playing, I was also listening to people like Chad Smith of the Red Hot Chili Peppers and Tim Alexander of Primus. Those two guys are all about swing. How the cymbals are being played, the ghost notes, the accents, the push or pull of the kick versus the snare—all of that creates a feel within the beat and that creates swing.

When I was in music school, I attended jazz lessons, and I went to see a lot of masterclasses by jazz-fusion drummers. I had a great teacher in Franck Agulhon who taught me about the basics of jazz drumming. That really opened my mind. Also, Sean Reinert was a huge influence on me. For those who don't know, he was the drummer in Cynic, and he played on the Death album *Human* (together with bassist Steve Di Giorgio, who incidentally recorded the bass on the new Megadeth album). Sean had a huge influence on the entire extreme metal scene back in the day. He was so ahead of his time. He brought splashes, dynamics, and a wonderful touch to extreme metal drumming. To this day, I feel that *Human* is an unparalleled masterpiece of drumming. Last year I was fortunate to be able to play at a few tributes to (Death singer and guitarist) Chuck Schuldiner, and because in the last years of his life, Sean was a very good friend to my wife and me, that was very emotional. But it was also an opportunity to really study his drumming again. There are so many amazing ideas there, it's amazing to think that he created the drums on that record when he was only 19.

It's maybe not a very "metal" thing to say, but swing is everything. I was literally just sitting practicing some jazz stuff before this

Cameron Nuez

interview, I'm not kidding!

MD: What type of stuff were you practicing?

DV: The jazz ride pattern and breaking up ideas between the snare and the kick drum. Reading figures with the kick drum and filling in the spaces with the snare drum. I wouldn't say that I could fill in with a jazz quartet, but it's great stuff to develop your balance at the drums.

MD: By balance, do you mean the inner dynamics of the drum set and how to balance the sounds while you are playing?

DV: Yes, absolutely, that's what I'm talking about. In this last year, I went through a huge period of listening to Miles Davis and Dave Brubeck almost daily. There is just so much greatness in their music! I remember my dad showing me "Take Five" when I was 16 or 17. At the end of the day, good music is good music, and it's always beneficial to open your mind, no matter what music you are playing. I think it's a huge benefit to have broad influences. That's what Sean showcased on *Human*, and that's a lot of what made it a GREAT record!

MD: You can hear a stark difference between your drumming approach in "Life in Hell" and "Night Stalkers." "Night Stalkers" seems like a more typical thrash metal tune and approach.

DV: Absolutely. But it's also a very complex track. There are a lot of layers to this music. When uninitiated people hear loud, fast metal, at first, they tend to just get struck by this wall of sound. But there's a lot to it once you develop your ear. Dave is a genius at arranging, including little melodies that he calls ear candy, and creating smart song structures. There are so many times when you will hear little things in a Megadeth song that you hadn't heard when you first listened to it.

MD: That's my definition of great music: music that, upon repeated listens, reveals itself to you over time. Music that, although you might have listened to a song thousands of times, you will always hear something new and wonder why you had never heard it before. That applies to everything from Stravinsky to John Coltrane to Prince to Cynic to Megadeth.

DV: Absolutely. I learn a lot watching Dave arrange songs. The way he approaches songs makes them exciting to listen to, not only the first five times, but the first 25 times.

MD: The groove on "Junkie" is pretty cool, where did that one come from?

DV: The working title for that song was "Gran Torino" because it had this "driving a fast car through the desert" kind of feel. Coming from Europe, I think of that as a very American thing, so that groove was my interpretation of what that would feel like. Dave has written a lot of car songs, so I was trying to bring that type of vibe. That riff has so much character, bite, and swagger that it made me think of the Stones, like developing something similar to how Mick and Keith interact on stage.

MD: The mention of Gran Torino makes me think of *Grand Theft Auto* which reminds me that you have done some drumming on a few different video games. How did that happen?

DV: A good friend of mine and amazing keyboard player, Kyle Morrison, put me in touch with the people at Epic Games. They had me play some stuff for *Fortnite*. Ra Diaz from Korn and Suicidal Tendencies played bass, and it was fun to do something that was completely different.

MD: How is video game music different?

DV: The musical director that wrote the *Fortnite* music came up with pretty precise ideas about how the song should evolve, and what the structure should be. He gave me a demo, but he had a very specific vision of how the song would work once we would be recording the "real" parts. We also did a few songs that were really short, like 30 second jingles. Although I have done 30 second grindcore songs, I hadn't ever played on a jingle. It was interesting to figure out how to tell a story in such a short time. It's about adapting to the narrative of a video game and telling that story instrumentally instead of lyrically. Usually, I will ask the composer what the game is about, and ask for some screenshots, just to have a starting point.

MD: The same way that we might ask about the lyrics of a song to help us create a drum part.

DV: Exactly.

MD: So maybe in the end, it's not really that different from creating music for other situations.

DV: You're right, and I would guess that being a musical director at a video game company would require understanding a range of musical styles, which brings us back to the benefits of developing an open mind towards different types of music.

I really spent time studying the drum parts of Gar Samuelson and Nick Menza. Along with Chuck Behler, those are the guys that created the legacy of the Megadeth drumming sound and style. Their work informed my approach to creating my parts for the new album.

MD: Back to the new record. You get a nice tom groove on "Psychopathy," and you are getting a very nice drum sound. What kind of drums are you playing?

DV: I have been with Tama since 1995, and with Megadeth I'm using a Starclassic Maple kit. Before that, I played a Birch/Bubinga Performer, but to me, Maple is the sound of Megadeth. Nick Menza played Maple Tama's, and my first Tama kit was a Starclassic Maple, so I went back to that. The drums are 22x18" kicks, 10, 12, 13" rack toms, 16 and 18" floor toms, and my signature 5½ x 14" bronze snare that we talked about earlier. Tama built me a gorgeous custom matte black kit featuring our mascot Vic Rattlehead.

My cymbals are Meinl. I use Classic Customs Dark crashes, secondary hi-hat and china, combined with Byzance Brilliant Heavy Hammered ride, main hi-hat and china. Those models work great together. The dark crashes have a perfect attack without being overpowering, and the Byzance Brilliant ride and hi-hat are my favorite cymbals in the world.

MD: "Killing Time" has a nice feel.

DV: Kiko Loureiro wrote the foundation for that song, and we went in as a band and finalized it together. It's very melodic, which is in my opinion one of Kiko's biggest strengths as a player and composer. It turned out to be a really cool song.

MD: On "Sacrifice" you introduce the groove in pieces. You start with a snare drum, then the bass drum, and then the cymbals. I don't hear stuff like that on many speed metal tunes.

DV: I really like to tell a story within a song. I like to have a beginning, a middle, and an end to my drum part. As I introduce the drumming in the choruses, I like to add a little more each time the next chorus comes around, so that when I get to the finale, I can be playing some

really crazy stuff. When a song is an AB, AB, lead, AB kind of structure, it tends to suit that approach. Building things up when the parts come back around helps me tell the story. That often (as you said) means starting off more sparsely, so there's room to evolve. If you go all out from the start, there just isn't anywhere you can go.

MD: I always call that approach "playing the plotline."

DV: That's it exactly. On the other side of things, we have songs like "Dogs of Chernobyl" where the structure is A, B, C, and nothing really repeats. That means I have to tell the story in a different way. In a certain sense, that type of structure gives you more freedom because you are not beholden to the verse-chorus concept. It's an opportunity to bring different colors and different nuances with every musical section, which is fun too.

MD: What is the writing process like in Megadeth? Does Dave bring you complete demos?

DV: For this record, Dave started things off by selecting a number of guitar riffs from his vault, which spans decades of ideas. I went to his house and tracked drum ideas to each of the riffs he picked out. He would give me suggestions or instructions. For each riff he'd ask me to play a straight beat, a busy beat, a fast beat, and an adventurous beat. That way, we'd get to hear which approaches worked and didn't work with each riff. Kiko came in to learn the riffs and sometimes add harmonies. Then, we got together for several months in 2019 and started fleshing things out. As the songs started taking shape, Dave would sometimes get more specific and ask me to play a certain idea at a certain time in a song. He knows what he wants and he's a very good arranger. In the end, I did compose all of my drum parts. I love that I was in on the songwriting process from the beginning. That gives you a sense of familiarity so that by the time you're in the studio, you can perform with confidence and work on every detail. When doing session work, you don't have that luxury most of the time.

Dave is really fun to work with. He has been depicted in the past as some kind of "tyrant." But he really is just a guy who cares a lot about his band and about what he does. He wants people to take it seriously, and he really wants this to be a BAND where everyone gets a chance to shine. He lets me experiment with drum parts and he wants everyone to contribute music. In the end, does Dave have the final say? Of course. Megadeth is the band he created back in the early 80s, and it's going stronger than ever.

MD: That's great to hear. It's so refreshing to hear about someone who cares so deeply about what they do, and demands high quality in his workmanship and art. There is nothing wrong with that.

DV: It's tough being a bandleader. Whenever something goes wrong in the public eye, the responsibility falls on Dave. Leading a band is a difficult and multi-faceted job with new challenges almost every day. I was managing Soilwork for a while, and believe me, things can get tense. It takes a strong personality to fill that role.

MD: As a drummer who really has his business together and has been around for a while, can you give young drummers some business advice?

DV: Outside of being the best on your instrument that you can be, which is (as we know) a lifelong mission, and being easy to get along with, I think it's really important to be a good listener. You have to listen to what's going on around you. That doesn't only mean while you are playing; it means at the drums, and away from the drums… Be a good listener and ask questions! You can get valuable advice from almost anyone in this business. Ask questions of managers, agents, producers, engineers, and other musicians, especially those that have been in this business longer than you. Any information is good information.

MD: You can always filter whatever you are told.

DV: Yes, and then you can build a library of knowledge that is going to play to your advantage. Listening to and learning from other people is important in all aspects of life.

MD: And isn't it amazing that being a good listener is also what makes someone a great drummer too?

DV: That's so very true, good point!

MD: What is the drumming inspiration for "We'll Be Back?"

DV: That's an old school scorcher. It has that vibe from back in the day when speed and thrash metal were nascent, exciting, and new; when nothing had been done that sounded like that. I have a few little tributes to previous Megadeth drummers in that tune. In the beginning, when I am hitting the kicks and cymbals at the same time, I do the cross-handed thing that Nick was famous for. Later on in the song, I play a fill that goes from the snare to the toms, but before I go to the toms, I put in a few open hi-hats, which is something that Gar loved to do. Both of those things happened very instinctually and organically, but I am really happy that "We'll Be Back" became the first single, because I care deeply about the tradition of Megadeth drumming.

> It's maybe not a very "metal" thing to say, but swing is everything. I was literally just sitting practicing some jazz stuff before this interview, I'm not kidding!

MD: What can you tell me about the tune "Célebutante?"

DV: For me, that has a real Motörhead meets Megadeth feel. It has that kind of energy. We dug into Dave's vault of riffs and found some cool ones that we thought fit together, and just started jamming on them.

MD: It's so weird that you mention Motörhead because when I first heard this record, I wondered, "*When did Lemmy join Megadeth?*"

DV: You're not the first one to say that. I think Dave has found a great new voice since beating throat cancer and his neck operation. That tune really does have a Motörhead on steroids kind of feel. There is a lot of technical and challenging drumming on that one, some off-beat accents and intricate fills. I like to challenge myself in the studio and subsequently on stage, and that song will definitely be challenging to play. I wanted the drums to match the urgency of the riffs, that excitement I felt as a teenager discovering this kind of music.

It also occurred to me that if I wanted to honor the jazz-fusion approach that Gar created on *Killing is My Business* and *Peace Sells*…, then "Célebutante" might be the perfect song to do that. Dave's riffs left the space for me to do go a little crazy without everyone wondering, "*What the hell is Dirk doing back there?*"

It's like we said: in the end, it's all about uplifting feelings and giving the people who buy the record or see us live something to get excited about. That's what creates that magical loop of energy that makes everyone have a great night at a concert or have fun listening to a record. This is a great time to see and listen to Megadeth. We are firing on all cylinders, *The Sick, the Dying… and the Dead!* is great, and the band is super tight. James LoMenzo is back playing bass, Kiko is awesome, and Dave sounds fantastic. We are really bringing it every night.

MD: And the drummer is absolutely killing it!!!

DV: Thanks. I am super proud to be a part of Megadeth.

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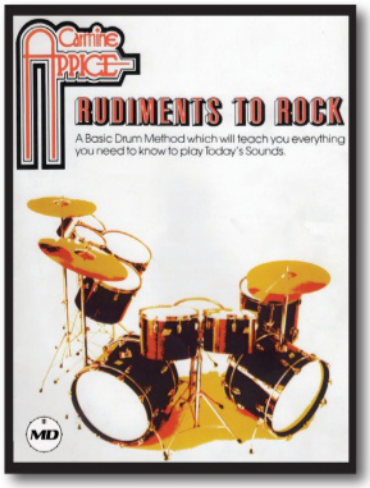

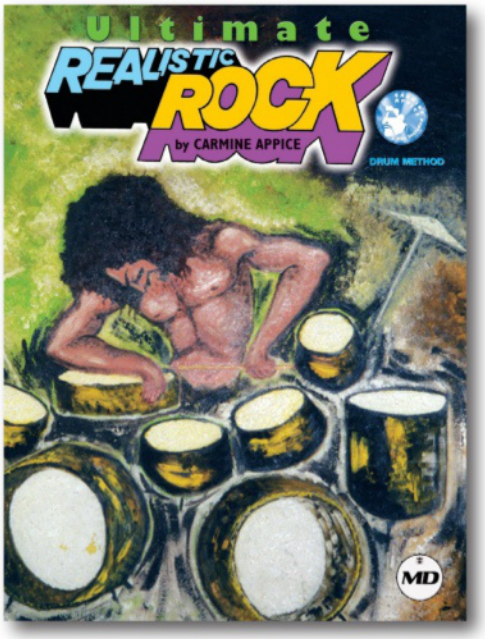

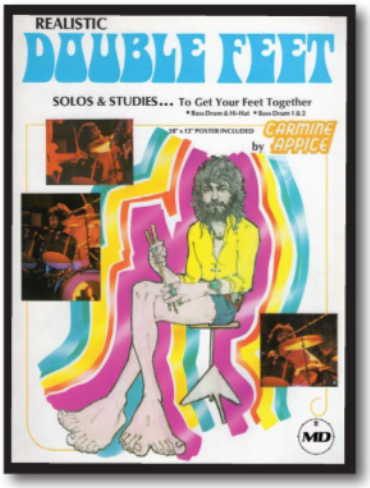

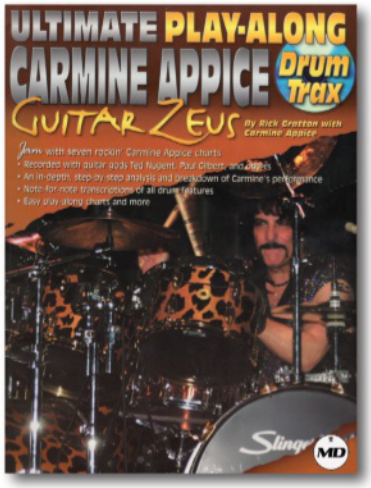

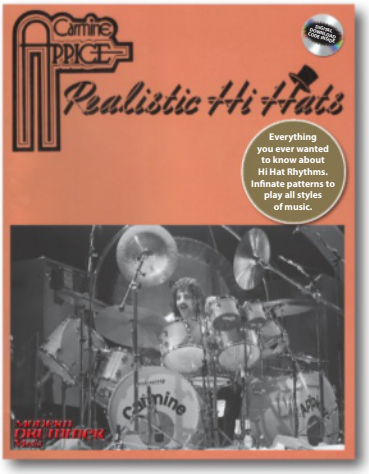

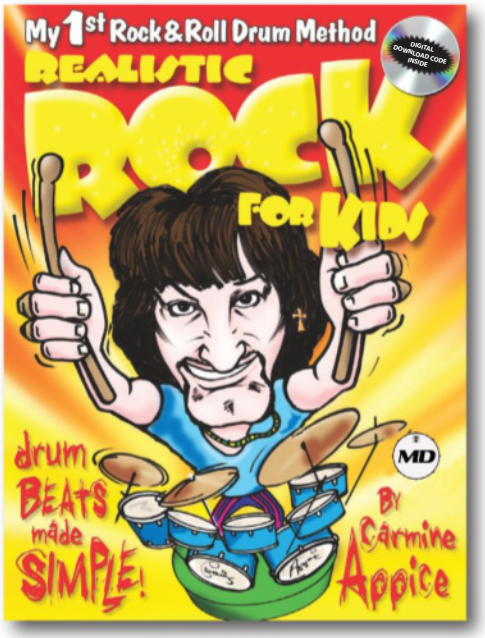

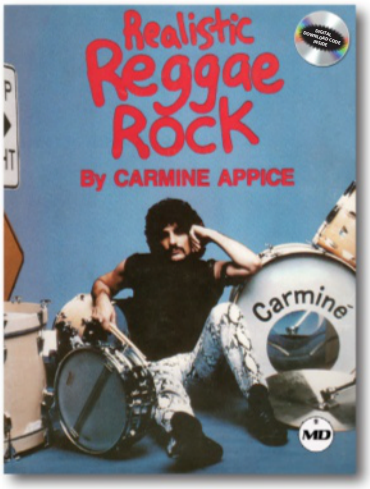

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The Daru Sessions

David Swanson

Vol.2

Influences and Hip Hop Drumming

By Mark Griffith

Daru Jones and I have returned with the second episode of The Daru Sessions. Daru Jones has just released a record called *Daru Jones Play the Breaks (Live at Layman.)* On it, he plays 25 grooves that he has recorded with other artists, and he explains their origins. The project comes with a book that has an introduction by the legendary Breakbeat Lou. It is a perfect source to create loops of Daru's drumming. Daru just released another project with producer Kev Brown called *A Daru State of Mind* featuring Eddie Sancho. Like Daru Jones Play the Breaks (Live at Layman,) this is also an entire recording of classic Daru beats and grooves. These records feature some great drumming. Some of the beats are sideways, some are straight up and down, but they all have that Daru "swag" that makes them special. All of Daru's various drum influences come through on these records. This time around I wanted to see if Daru could dive a little deeper into his many musical and drumming influences.

MD: You ended our last conversation by saying, "I am still learning and developing, but I think that I have developed a noticeable drumming identity and voice." It's interesting to hear you say that a drummer like yourself in your early forties, you feel like you are still continuing to further your voice and identity on the drums. I run across young drummers every day who are 15 or 18 years old who say they are finding "their voice" and identity on the drums. Can you

speak to your process of developing your own voice on the drums?

DJ: A lot of younger drummers are doing things and playing ideas that have already been played, but because they haven't done their homework, they don't realize that what they think is new, has already been done. They think they have developed "their thing" but they are playing something because they already heard it somewhere.

MD: Yes, but it is pretty hard to put the pressure on yourself to always be playing "something new."

DJ: I agree, but if you widen your influences and your sounds, you will come up with new combinations of things that already exist. For example, I can take something that has already been played by one of our heroes, and leave a few notes out. Or I can play an idea that someone else has played, but play it on my different drumset. If I do those things, the identity of the vocabulary with become mine.

MD: How were you influenced by the older R&B drummers?

DJ: I really dug the intention that they played with. You could hear every little note that those guys played. Whether it was a little ruff in the groove, or some ghost notes in a fill. They were very clear with what they were playing, and how they played. They also taught us how important repetition is in groove. Those guys were human loops. Every bar was the consistent and very similar. Their beats felt so good, but they were wonderfully repetitious, which is what helped make the music groove. Listen to a couple of the greatest grooves ever, Clyde Stubblefield's "Funky Drummer" and Bernard Purdie's "Purdie Shuffle." Those guys don't add that much to each bar when they play those grooves, but that repetition is infectious and funky.

David Swanson

MD: Did you ever listen to James Gadson?

DJ: He's a little different. He would move notes around to coincide and stay out of the way of the lyrics. When I worked with producer Pete Rock, he wanted me to do that. Pete liked when you would create variations on the groove to compliment the lyrics.

MD: You had mentioned gospel music in a previous interview that we did. What gospel music did you grow up hearing?

DJ: Chris Coleman and I came up together we grew up playing gospel music. I don't mean "fusion gospel," and this was before "Gospel Chops." I'm talking Andre Crouch with drummer Bill Maxwell vibe. He's one of my favorite drummers. I still listen to all of the Winans records that he did, all of the Andre Crouch records that he did. Bill Maxwell is a genius in my eyes, he's really special.

MD: Have you ever heard him on the Koinonia records, it's groove heaven!

DJ: Dana Davis was one of my biggest gospel influences from Detroit, and he was the Winans touring drummer. We Also become good friends. He would always tell me about Bill. Although Dana was always playing New-Jack Swing in church, he always had an island sound or influence in his playing, and I think Bill does too. There was another drummer named Michael Williams who played with Commissioned. That was the group that Fred Hammond was in, and then Fred went solo and started his own group with…

MD: Marvin McQuitty!

DJ: I was crushed when Marvin died.

MD: That was right when the "Gospel Chops" thing began to take off, and he just never seemed to get the appreciation that he deserved because he had died. But he was an amazing drummer.

MD: Did the "Gospel Chops" approach have a strong influence on your playing?

DJ: I always want my, for lack of a better term, "real" Gospel roots to come through in anything that I play. To me that means letting the true spirit of playing from within, and letting the creator come into me and use me as a vessel to uplift, spread joy, and connect with people. The Gospel attitude of "say what you mean and mean what you say" is a big part of my playing. But the way the Gospel Chops guys would just go for it did influence me too. But it was more from the "go for it" attitude of "how" they played, more-so that "what" they played.

There is another drummer from that same style that never got the attention he deserved named LaDell Abrams. LaDell played with John P. Kee and Usher, and he later played with Cece Winans. The drummer that played with the Indiana State Mass Choir is named Kenny Phelps, and I love his playing. He was probably the first Gospel drummer that I heard playing with a double bass drum pedal. It sucks that guys like Bill, Marvin, Dana, LaDell, and Eddie Heyward and Jeff Davis who both played with Hezekiah Walker kind of got overlooked from a certain standpoint. They are some of Gospel's biggest drumming influences that also had an impact on me as well.

MD: I don't know why some drummers have become more famous and more well-known, and some drummers haven't.

DJ: Maybe those drummers I mentioned didn't have an interest in industry-wide recognition. One thing that any young drummer can do is to go to the NAMM and PASIC conventions. People get comfortable playing in their own environments, but (in my opionion) you have to keep expanding. It's always a great idea to meet people face to face and shake their hands. There are a lot of drummers who haven't paid a lot of dues, but they have gone to these conventions and shaken some hands, so they wind up getting more attention and the spotlights.

MD: Speaking of drummers that haven't gotten enough attention, I want to ask you about J. Dilla. You came in as the Slum Village drummer for their live band, and they were a group that J. Dilla was producing and creating the beats. I have always dug J Dilla's "thing," but I don't know much about him. Tell me about Dilla?

David Swanson

DJ: J Dilla was a great drummer. He wasn't the most technical drummer, but he could play enough to compose and produce, and he had an identity. He became known for those drunken sounding, glitchy drum beats and patterns. Back in the day when drummers like Bernard Purdie were playing and they would get a little sideways because something got a little messed up. I believe that was the stuff that inspired Dilla, and he started to try to play like that. I'm guessing that when he programmed things, he wouldn't want to quantize them, and he started to try and actually play very un-quantized. He would actually practice that stuff.

From what I have heard when he would sample, he would sample anything and make music out of it. But when he sampled music that was identifiable, he would cut it up and manipulate it so much, that it became un-identifiable. Then there was his stuttering drum patterns. Other producers did this stuff too, but Dilla took it to the next level, and it became his musical identity.

All of the groups that were part of the "Boom Bap 90s" like De La Soul, Common, A Tribe Called Quest, and Busta Rhymes were all influenced by J Dilla. He wound up producing a lot of those groups, but just when that started getting big, he died at the age of 32 from Lupus. He was truly ahead of his time.

Dilla's influential style was passed along to Detroit's Kareem Riggins, who is killin' and he is carrying the torch. When I was playing with Slum Village I had been a fan of Dilla's production's, and that made it easier for me to absorb his approach. You know, the "You are what you eat" type of thing. I couldn't write it down, and I don't even know if I could explain it, I just heard it all of the time, and I was forced to figure it out. No YouTube, no books, just listen and figure it out.

MD: What are some of the best J Dilla recordings to check out. I have had my copy of *Donuts* for a long time, and I'm ready for something new?

DJ: Slum Village *Fantastic Vol. 1* and *2*, his own projects called *Welcome To Detroit*, *Ruff Draft,* De La Soul *Stakes is High*, Tribe Called Quest *Find My Way*, and the Busta Rhymes stuff is killin! You mentioned *Donuts*, that was the first project that he did with purely samples and loops, there was no additional drums on *Donuts*. But every time I listen to Slum Village, it sounds like it was released yesterday.

MD: If we are talking about rap and hip-hop drumming, and guys that died young, and guys that have gone virtually unnoticed, I have to ask you if you are hip to Pumpkin?

DJ: Wow, I just recently learned about Pumpkin, he was one of, or maybe the original, hip-hop drummer. I have a band with guitarist Marcus Machado and Doug Wimbish the bassist from Living Color called DMD The Vibes, and Marcus and Pumpkin are first cousins. Marcus told me that Pumpkin was playing mostly Simmons drums on a lot of the old Sugar Hill Gang and Grandmaster Flash records.

MD: He does have a record out of his own, but if you want to talk about OG of hip-hop drumming, Pumpkin is it. Unfortunately, he died a while back, and no one has really championed him, so he is a little forgotten. The only thing that I could ever found out about him was that the springs on his bass drum pedal were so stiff and tight that you could almost stand on it without it moving. He has a record out and on the cover of the record he is playing a big Pearl bass drum, what looks to be 13" and 14" Gretsch Toms, and what looks to be an 18" floor tom

DJ: I just want people to know that when they hear me play, I'm bringing a small piece of influence of all of these drumming greats to the table with me: John Bonham, Bill Maxwell, Clyde Stubblefield, Stewart Copeland, Dana Davis, Vinnie Colaiuta, ?uestlove, J Dilla and more, along with my own gospel roots and original vibe.. Those guys are a part of my drumming DNA. When people don't talk about their influences and who inspired them, they just aren't being truthful.

MD: When you are playing live hip-hop drums these days, are you using your traditional kit?

DJ: I just got some of the new Paiste flats and I love them. I had never played a flat ride, then I played them at PASIC and thought that was a sound that I could really use in my set-up, and I love it. I was using a 22" Dark Energy for a while, but it was a little too dark, but the brightness of the new flat will be a nice contrast to my other rides, and I am going to put some miles on the new flat.

MD: It makes sense that a flat could work in a hip-hop setting. They won't wash out the vocals. I really love how it sounds when you lay into and crash a flat too.

DJ: That's a really funky sound, I agree.

MD: I've heard that the next time that we talk we can talk about some *other* new equipment that you are using too.

DJ: Maybe....

Joe Franco

Double Bass Drum Renaissance Man

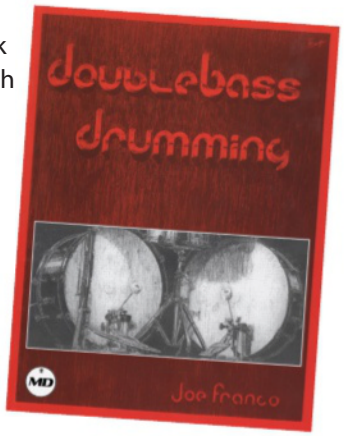
By Mark Griffith

Cheryl Smith

This year is the 40th Anniversary of one of the best drum books ever written, Joe Franco's *Double Bass Drumming*. In 1964 Colin Bailey published *Bass Drum Contro*l. That was the first book that dealt with the subject of playing the bass drum, bass drum control, and speed. It is a legendary book written by a legendary teacher. By 1982 a musical change was happening. Jazz drummers like Louie Bellson, Ed Shaugnessy and Dave Black, and rock drummers like Ginger Baker, Carmine Appice, and Aynsley Dunbar had all started to utilize two bass drums and had started to create a new vocabulary for what was being called "double bass drumming." At the time, drummers were using Bailey's book for developing their double bass drumming. Louie Bellson had written a book on double bass drums, but there were no books that dealt specifically with the powerful sound of double bass drums in rock music. Carmine Appice's book *Realistic Rock* had a short section on double bass drumming. It was a fantastic primer that laid the groundwork for how Baker and Appice were playing with two bass drums. Carmine had also started to develop a concept of how to develop new beats and a specific double bass drum vocabulary.

With the inspiration of the aforementioned drummers and books, drummers started to take the new idea of double bass drumming very seriously. But there was a need for a good book to support and nurture this new approach in drumming, and 40 years ago, Joe Franco filled that need.

Joe Franco is a New York City drummer that has made a name for himself playing with The Good Rats, Chilliwack, Fiona, Doro Pesch, Leslie West, Jack Bruce, Widowmaker, Steve Walsh, Magellan and Twisted Sister.



Joe Franco's book *Double Bass Drumming* is the most important book in developing a strong concept in double bass drumming. His approach (called The Single Stroke System) brought power, control, and a new vocabulary to double bass drumming. And today, 40 years later, Joe's book is still teaching and inspiring drummers to play double bass drums. *Modern Drummer* has been sharing some of Joe's most important concepts from the book. And in upcoming months, Joe is going to show us some new ways to apply and work through the book, as well as some new double bass drum lessons. But before we do that, we wanted to re-introduce Joe Franco to the younger world of drumming, because (as you will read) he has had a very interesting and successful career. However, it is a career that (throughout the last 20 years,) has not had him on the front pages of drumming magazines. But that doesn't mean that he hasn't been out there working, making music, teaching, playing in front of big crowds, and inspiring musicians. Joe Franco is a truly renaissance drummer and musician.

MD: I must admit, that since your book and success with the various rock bands, I have lost track of your career. When I watched you on the *Modern Drummer Podcast* with John DeChristopher I had no idea what you had been doing for the last 30 years.

JF: I've had a very interesting career and being a drummer has led to everything else in my life. You begin as a young drummer in a bar band, and that (hopefully) leads to other things.

MD: In your case it has led to many other things!

JF: Indeed! My musical beginnings were like most musicians my age. Seeing the Beatles on Ed Sullivan, then the British Invasion bands. Soon after I became very influenced by the local New York version of that scene with The Rascals, Vanilla Fudge, and The Vagrants (Leslie West's first band). The difference was that those bands were from my area, and the guys were local and approachable. Dino was a cooler version of Ringo, and he played at my high school. Carmine was Dino on steroids and I saw his very first drum clinic in Hempstead, Long Island. I'd never seen that kind of power on a drum kit from up close, and I was blown away. I asked him if he taught, and he gave me his number, so I started taking lessons with him while he was writing *Realistic Rock*. Carmine's influence really stayed with me and inspired me to write *Double Bass Drumming* ten years later. I was impressed seeing a "Rock

Star" putting tons of energy towards education through his clinics and lessons. Carmine noticed that my left foot was lazy, so he suggested playing time with my left foot on the hi hat to build strength and coordination. My left foot started "dancing" and when I started playing double bass, I played the way that Ginger and Carmine did. I took my left foot which was pumping eighth notes on my hi hat and moved it to my left bass drum. No matter what I was playing (a duple feel or a triple feel,) my left foot always either kept time on the hi hat or led my double bass rolls and shuffles. I did that for ten years from 1972 until 1982. At the time my band, Good Rats were opening for bands with cool double bass drummers from Rush with Neil to Journey with Aynsley and Steve and I had a bird's eye view of their playing. At the time, late 70's, whenever the Rats weren't touring, we were mainstays in the thriving NY club scene. In the early 80's that club scene changed for lots of reasons, and I saw the writing on the wall, so I took a touring gig with a successful Canadian band, Chilliwack. After I came home from that tour in December 1982, it was the first time in ten years I wasn't constantly gigging, and I decided to write a drum book.

Steve Pace

At the time, I had developed fast double bass drum rolls and shuffles. Audiences were impressed, but I wanted to do more. I wanted to do something different with my bass drums, something more musical. Playing fast sixteenth notes was cool but I wanted to play patterns and wanted to have an organized way of playing the patterns so my ideas went directly to my limbs without having to use my brain. That's why I developed the Single Stroke System.

MD: So what is the Single Stroke System?

JF: The Single Stroke System is a simple concept. You lead with your right (or main) foot on the down beats, so you play downbeats with the right foot and upbeats with the left. The body stays in motion, and everything sounds fluid. It's very much like strumming a guitar where you have down strums and up strums.

MD: That might seem a little "obvious" to drummers today.

JF: Yes, but at the time it was different from how everyone was playing double bass. Seasoned drummers were comfortable playing time with their hi hat foot and adopted the approach of moving the hi hat foot to the left bass drum. As I said, that's how Ginger, Carmine, and Aynsley Dunbar played, so my concept of The Single Stroke System was a new thing at the time. When I started teaching

Cheryl Smith

this system to beginners, it was totally "obvious" to lead with their main bass drum.

In the book I have different rhythmic patterns in the first section, I have a linear section, and then I have a third section based on playing a bass drum roll and being able to coordinate your hands to play accents and different permutations of singles and doubles over the bass drum roll.

With this system, you can take notes out of patterns to create different grooves. But what's important is that if a note is left out, the footing doesn't change. For example, in a sixteenth note roll, if you leave out beat three (that would be played with the right foot) the next note that you play is still a left. Picture a blackboard where you have RLRL RLRL RLRL RLRL for all of the sixteenth notes in a bar. If you erase any note, the footing still stays the same. That is the subtractive way of thinking. But you can also think of an additive approach. If you start with the right foot playing 1& and 3&, then play the e's and a's of 1 and 3 you get an embellished groove, but the main kick drum still plays 1& and 3&. All of this works and sounds fluid because your body stays in constant motion

MD: And it sounds musical. Which is sometimes a downfall of double bass drumming.

JF: Yes, and one of my favorite things about this system is when you come out of a linear fill, you're set up to crash on the downbeat with your right hand and right foot together.

MD: So simply put, if you start out by playing RLRL sixteenth notes, no matter what notes you leave out the sticking stays the same.

JF: That's it. In the early 1900's, there was a guy who taught sticking this way named Ed Straight. He was a founding member of NARD (The National Association of Rudimental Drummers). He developed what he called the "Straight System" of sticking and called it "a natural way to play the drums." When I did some research while writing the book, I talked to every double bass drummer and picked their brains. I remember approaching Terry Bozzio at a PAS show and asked him why he led rolls with his left foot and if it bothered him to have to crash at the end of a phrase with his left foot. He thought about it for a second and said, "No it doesn't bother me as I just play a double right at the end of the phrase and still crash and play with my right bass drum." Ha!

Recently, I've been listening to a few European metal bands like Soen and Gojira, and those guys are doing exactly what I envisioned drummers doing when I wrote my book. I'm really digging Soen's new record *Imperial*, it's like Pink Floyd meets Tool, they're a cool band.

MD: What were your original double bass drumming influences?

JF: When I first started playing, I wasn't aware of Louie Bellson, who is usually credited as the first double bass drummer. I heard Cream's "Toad," and that's what did it for me. I noticed that Ginger had two different pitches happening in his bass drum roll.

Steve Pace

MD: Because he had the two different sized bass drums.

JF: Yup, the 22" on the left and the 20" on the right. However, the first time I heard "Toad" on *Fresh Cream*, I didn't even know it was double bass, I thought he was playing a roll between his floor tom and kick, so I practiced playing a sixteenth note roll with my right hand on my floor tom playing the down beats, and my right foot on my bass drum playing the up beats. I had that down!!! Then I saw a picture of Cream, and I saw the two bass drums, and it blew my mind. Two bass drums hadn't even occurred to me.

Then I watched Brits like Michael Giles, Barriemore Barlow, and Jon Hiseman. Eventually I saw Terry Bozzio with Zappa and was blown away. Then (of course) Billy Cobham with "Quadrant 4," and Simon Phillips with "Space Boogie." I was hooked!

What's interesting is that at the time I wrote my book, if I only

wrote about what I was playing on double bass at the time, the entire book would only be the third part, which is soloing over the double bass roll. That's what I developed first, and (as I said) impressed audiences. But I wanted to explore a little more. I started teaching and while teaching, I developed concepts that were more musical. That's where the Single Stroke System came from. While I was exploring these concepts, I was trying them out with students.

MD: That is such an important aspect to a great book. The fact that you were teaching these ideas while you were writing the book. I believe that is how ALL of the greatest drum books have evolved. A great drummer teaches, and through teaching, he devises his own processes and concepts, and then he puts them into a book. It shouldn't happen in reverse. Can you talk about the importance of your teaching on the book?

JF: Teaching was an important part of the process as I was teaching concepts as I was developing them and getting feedback from my students was rewarding and assuring.

MD: I always like to ask drummers who teach about their old students. Do any of your old students stick out in your mind?

JF: I have a student who I started teaching when he was 15 named John Macaluso. He played with TNT and Yngwie Malmsteen, and he's a killer drummer with a brilliant imagination. He studied with me while I was writing the book. Greg D'Angelo from White Lion was studying with me when he was a teenager as well. John Tempesta reminded me that he took a lesson with me way back. I didn't remember but we're now buds. He's such a great rocker!

The teacher student relationship is very personal. I'm proud of many of my former students. Some of them are still my best friends, much like the relationship I had and still have with Carmine. He used to take me out to clubs to see jazz drummers like Roy Haynes, and then I did the same thing with my students, and today hopefully the tradition continues. So many drummers would come to New York and just take a lesson or two with me to see what my double bass drum thing was about, in the same way that I took some lessons with Tony Williams. I knew that no matter what happened in the lesson, I'd come out inspired!

MD: I know there were others, but I think it's nice to see how drummers like Carmine really created the template for guys like you and I and many others. Working drummers who do some teaching, develop some concepts while teaching, write a book or two that describe those concepts, keep working as musicians, do some clinics, and develop entire careers emanating from the drums.

JF: I agree and like I said, being a drummer led to everything else in my life. I met my wife 30 years ago on a session that she was producing. My "second career" in audio for television started when I was asked to play drums for a children's TV show.

MD: Let's talk about that interesting twist in your drumming career.

JF: Well, I did a lot of programming in the late 80s. I had already done some programming for offshoot projects for the TV show *Sesame Street*. There was a new *Sesame Street* type of show in the late 90's called *Between the Lions* which had a bunch of former Sesame producers and writers. They were putting a band together for the show and invited me to play drums. I had just put together my studio, Beatstreet and asked if they'd consider recording me there as I was always mic'd up and ready to rock. They came to see my studio and said they'd love to record the music for the show there. That led to even more work for children's TV and since then, the studio has tripled in size. We do a lot of work for Nickelodeon and Sesame Workshop. But now it's not just music, we do sound design, foley work, 5.1 mixing and all things audio. But again, how did it start? It started 25 years ago with me being asked to play drums for a kid's TV show.

MD: It's so interesting to see how careers develop. Your main focus has gone from playing in hard rock bands, to teaching and publishing a book on double bass drumming, to programming, to owning a studio, to kids TV, and then back to playing in hard rock bands.

JF: Yup, in my mind, I'm still a hard rock drummer. One of my favorite bands I played in was Widowmaker. Dee Snider asked me to play in Widowmaker after I played with Twisted Sister. However, because it took five years to get going, music tastes had moved on and we were playing 80's music in the grunge 90s so the band never took off.

One of the coolest experiences of my career was with Leslie West and Jack Bruce. That was probably the record I played on that I'm

the proudest of, (for obvious reasons.) While we were recording the album, we got a phone call from a theater in Poughkeepsie NY called The Chance. A band had cancelled last minute on them, and they were wondering if we would come up and fill in for that night's show. Jack and Leslie agreed, and I was on cloud nine! Before I knew it, we were in the dressing room and Jack was writing out a set list on a paper plate. That was one of my happiest days as a drummer. Thankfully, they recorded the whole show, and parts of that show have surfaced in many forms.

MD: You mentioned that you had started doing a lot of programming at one point.

JF: Yeah, in the mid 80's, studio work was slowing down as drum machines were becoming the norm. I detested their whole existence (like everybody else.) I hated the original Linn Drum but when the EMU SP-12 came out it really changed my life. With the SP-12, you were able to personalize the machine with your own sounds. Then with the evolution of samplers, I started sampling a ton of hi hat sounds and played them on an Octapad and eventually, a Drumkat. My hi hat sampling and programming made drum tracks sound very realistic, and that caught the ear of a producer named Ric Wake, which led me to do programming for records by Taylor Dayne, Mariah Carey, Celine Dion, Diana Ross, all the divas! Meanwhile, in the rock world Mutt Lange was creating humongous drum sounds on all those Def Leppard records, and everyone wanted their drums to sound like that. By then, I was way into the electronic thing, so I started getting gigs replacing drum sounds. At the time, I was in Twisted Sister, then Widowmaker playing metal while I was programming drum parts for the pop divas and replacing drum sounds on rock records. It was a busy time.

MD: Were you in Twisted Sister before or after AJ Pero?

JF: I was in Twisted Sister after AJ and I miss him dearly, he was a good friend. All the guys in Twisted Sister are still close friends of mine.

MD: AJ and I met later in his career, and his humanity made a huge impression on me, he was a GREAT guy, I learned a lot from him. It's always fascinating to see how careers in music develop.

JF: You would like to think that you are in control of your career but you're not. The phone rings and you try to seize every opportunity. I'm lucky to have grown up in NYC where there were opportunities galore.

MD: You just mentioned living in New York City, how much has that contributed to your career and education in music?

JF: When I was young, I lived at the Fillmore East, I saw Hendrix there, I saw Jethro Tull, Procol Harum and Traffic two or three times a year. You couldn't do that anywhere else except perhaps San Francisco or Los Angeles. We used to have a routine where we'd go to the early show at the Fillmore, and then go around the corner to The Electric Circus. It seemed like this band called Sly and The Family Stone was playing there every other week. They would play covers of the old R&B classics, I thought they were a local band. This was way before "Dance To the Music." They had records out before that was a hit.

MD: That was probably around *A Whole New Thing*, and the tune "Underdog."

JF: Yup, "Underdog" a great tune! Gregg Errico was playing drums, they were amazing. I found out later that they were from San Francisco. The Electric Circus would bring all these great bands in: Sly, Deep Purple, James Gang, Alice Cooper.

MD: You mentioned Jethro Tull, was that with Barrimore Barlow or Clive Bunker?

JF: Clive Bunker was their drummer in the Fillmore days. The four records that he played on were my musical formative years. Barrimore came later when they were playing big venues like Madison Square Garden.

MD: I don't know much about Clive Bunker, tell me something about seeing him.

JF: He was a little like Mitch Mitchell, he was a jazzer. You can hear the beginning of Clive playing double bass on *Benefit*. Both he and Mitch played double bass for a bit, that was Ginger's influence, but it wasn't really their thing. In fact, I remember Ian Anderson introducing Clive at the Fillmore after a drum solo when he first added a 2nd bass drum as "that's Clive Bunker on his Ginger

Steve Pace

Baker drum kit". So back to your question. Yes, New York was very important because you could see everybody, but also because you could study with everybody.

MD: You had mentioned studying with Tony Williams, how did that come about?

JF: Tony Williams used to put an ad in the Village Voice advertising for drum lessons. I simply called and booked a couple of lessons. During lessons, I couldn't help but notice all the vinyl hanging around and at the top of the stack were The Ramones and Pink Floyd. This was 1973, and Tony Williams was listening to The Ramones, how cool is that?!?

Let me back up a bit. In my high school years, Cream and the Jimi Hendrix Experience were a *religion*. After they both broke up, I followed the players. When Cream broke up, Jack Bruce started playing with this guy, "Tony Williams." I didn't know who Tony was, I wasn't listening to Miles Davis at the time. But I went out and bought Tony's *Turn it Over* because Jack Bruce was on it. As soon as I heard the first tune on the second side in 6/8, my mind was blown. I immediately started checking out all the jazz-rock guys like Alphonse Mouzon, Billy Cobham, Lenny White and Narada Michael Walden throughout the 70s. This was also around the time that Tony was putting the New Lifetime together with Holdsworth. I have always been a sonics guy and love great sounding records. When Tony put out *Believe It*, with the 24" kick, he sounded huge. Ditto for Billy on *Spectrum* with Ken Scott engineering. Both of those albums blew me away. For me it was about the drumming and the sonics. Speaking of Narada and sonics, I have to say that his newest record *Immortality* is amazing. Killer playing and what a drum sound! I would put it up there with *Spectrum* and *Believe It*, it's that good!

MD: So what were lessons with Tony like?

JF: We sat down with a pad between us. He asked me to play some on the pad. I was probably playing with my pinky's out, and he stopped me and said, "You gotta play with your hands!" He got me to grip the sticks with my last two fingers. He told me, "That's where the fulcrum is, forget about your front fingers." I recently saw a video of him giving a clinic in Dallas on YouTube, and he was talking about the same stuff.

MD: Before you wrote your book and were teaching, were you thinking of double bass drumming as a separate entity or was it just a part of what you did. Because you eventually became the "double bass drumming" guy?

JF: It was always a part of what I did, but when the book came out and I started doing drum clinics, it became a predominant part of what I did. I love talking and teaching double bass. Most of the clinics and drum shows I've done, I talk about double bass. I also like talking about phrasing as I'm a math nerd and like exploring the ways you can mix up groupings of notes in a measure or in multiple measures.

MD: You mentioned some of the Brits, how into them were you at the time?

JF: Michael Giles really caught my ear. Both Bruford and Peart gave Michael Giles a lot of credit for his inspiration. His approach to drum parts on the first King Crimson album is legendary. He did a cool record with Ian MacDonald called MacDonald and Giles and it had a

song called "Turnham Green."
MD: I LOVE that record!
JF: So do I! Giles played cool double bass patterns as opposed to just playing rolls.
MD: I 'think" he might have used two different size bass drums too.
JF: I'm not sure, it's possible.
MD: Aside from you, were there any other drummers at the time who were leading with their right foot when playing double bass drums.
JF: Yes, Steve Smith. Good Rats used to open for Journey when Aynsley was in the band a lot. When Steve joined the band, we were still doing openers for Journey, and he and I really bonded. Steve was ditching the tradition of left foot lead and showed me how he was using the Colin Bailey book to work on his right foot lead. He interpreted that book for his linear stuff. I tried talking to as many double bass players as I could, and Steve was the only cat I knew who was playing right foot lead. These days so many drummers are playing doubles and *Stick Control* patterns with their feet, which is amazing. I gotta say I'm totally old school when it comes to double bass. I keep it simple and I like to move air!
MD: How do you tune and muffle to get more air moving?
JF: I tune medium tension and use the DW adjustable pillows that lightly touch each of the heads. I also use two holes in each front head to get a little more air moving.

I've been playing DW drums for 20 years or so. When I started doing the TV shows I had to lose my 24's as I needed a more versatile kit. So DW and I put together a kit that I could use on either a metal gig or a children's TV show recording by simply changing the snare. I can use this same DW kit consisting of 10, 13, 15, 18 toms and two 22 kicks for everything. For the rock gigs I use a 5.5 Edge snare, and for the TV gigs I use a 13 x 4" Aluminum snare. The 13" snare really sits nicely in a mix, and the Edge takes over a mix! I love these tom sizes as I can tune them in fourths. I like the spread between the 10 and 13 and with the 15" floor tom, the 18 is an inch closer. The 15 is a great sounding floor tom.

Steve Pace

MD: I agree, I love 15" floor toms, they should be a standard.
JF: When we discussed the drum sizes, I didn't think I would like the 15, so DW made me both a 15 and a 16. Scott Garrison told me that after I tried the 15, I would never use the 16. He nailed it! The first time I had a 15" tom was in the early 70's and it was a rack tom. I had a Ludwig Maple kit in the 70s that was a 26, 15, 16, 18. I then switched to 18 and 20 floor toms, making the kit 26, 15,18, 20.
MD: DAMN! Talk about moving air!
JF: Ha! Those Ludwig Maples were great drums with nice thin shells. My DW's actually sound very similar to them, I still have the Ludwig's. Eventually I traded in the 26 for two 24s.
MD: How is your body holding up after a lifetime of drumming?
JF: Well…I had issues with both hips recently but thanks to modern technology and titanium, I'm back on my feet. This all happened over the pandemic, so I guess it was timely. During my down time recovering from surgeries, I started taking stick technique lessons with Bill Bachman.
MD: How has the process with Bill gone, and where and why did it start?
JF: I had a bit of tendonitis on the top of my left wrist, and I read an article in *Modern Drummer* that Bill wrote on the topic, so I looked him up. He has changed my grip from a very palms down German grip to a sort of American grip where my thumbs are halfway between French (thumbs up,) and German (palms down.) Now I can practice for 3 hours, and my butt hurts before my hands do. Bill is a really good teacher. After going through his *Extreme Hands Makeover,* he got me into hybrid rudiments. I've also been going through Steve Gadd's *Gaddiments,* which is a challenging book.
MD: Did your hip issues come from drumming?
JF: I'm pretty sure they did. I used to sit 20 inches off the ground, and that's too low. I'm now sitting higher now with my butt higher than my kneecaps.
MD: It's strange, as drummers we are always concerned with our hands, backs, and rotator cuffs, but no one really ever mentions hips. But I know quite a few drummers who have had hip issues and hip replacements.
JF: It's an issue, I'm glad I got mine fixed, I feel great now.
MD: Did you ever think about writing a second book on double bass drumming?
JF: Yes, I started a Volume 2 but then things got busy so when I did my *Double Bass Drumming* Video, I took the ideas that would have been in Volume 2, like sextuplets, thirty-second notes, 3 & 4 Stroke ruffs and put them there so the video covers some cool concepts that aren't in the book.
MD: I use it today to teach double bass drums, and I can't find a better book to help people develop their double bass drum sound, power, and control.
JF: Thank You! And thanks for celebrating the 40th anniversary of the book with this interview. I'm proud of the book and can't believe it's been 40 years!

Elizabeth Lang: THE BIG DRUM BONANZA

By Mark Griffith

On September 22nd through 25th Champion Sight and Sound Studios in Los Angeles will *try* to contain **The Big Drum Bonanza.** "BDB" is a multi-day drum camp event that started in 2010. It features a different group of drum instructors every year, and this year boasts a stellar list of established pros and new-comers including Simon Phillips, Kenny Aronoff, Russ Miller, Nate Morton, Jotan Afandor, and Sarah Thawer. However, what really makes the Big Drum Bonanza really special and stand apart from anything else that's out there (in terms master classes and players camps,) is that this is the only one that each student-member in the camp has his own practice drum set to use during classes. We talked to producer and host Elizabeth Lang about the history of The Big Drum Bonanza and what sets it apart from the rest.

Elizabeth Lang and Aqulies Priester

MD: Congratulations on your 10th year of the Big Drum Bonanza, we're glad to see that you made it through the obstacle of COVID. Where are you doing the camp this year?

EL: This year we are going to be at Champion Sight and Sound Studios in Los Angeles. That is an incredible recording facility, we've got a huge room, we've got a big space, and everybody has their own practice kits so when our instructors are teaching their lessons everything is truly hands on. The students aren't just sitting there, they are actually playing along. That creates this wonderful team environment. That single aspect of this camp makes a huge impact on learning, participation, and enjoyment. Everyone is working together, making their own mistakes together, and learning together.

I think it's very typical for people in a one-on-one environment to feel a little stressed or anxious if you're not doing things correctly. But all of that just melts away in a group setting, because you're just right there playing along fearlessly with the group. It's like singing along to the radio in your car. You can sing along all day, but the second the music stops and it's just you all alone, you get very self-conscious and stop. In the environment of the Big Drum Bonanza, you are never playing alone, and that's exciting! At the BDB you are not stagnant, you aren't sitting and just listening. There's just no substitute for that kind of learning, teamwork, and spirit. It's inspiring and it lifts everyone up. We've been doing this camp for so long, it's been incredible for me to see people that have attended our camp have remained friends and have gone on to build professional drumming careers.

MD: Who attends your camps?

EL: We've had everybody from the very young, to people who are thinking about going on to study music at a university, to people who are playing in bands, to older people who have played drums their whole life and this is their yearly getaway. In those cases, sometimes people bring their families, and the family sightsees while they participate in the camp. It's a unique blend of destination

tourism, education, and a musical event. It's not called a *bonanza* for nothing! However, we do ask that no one attends the camp that has no experience playing drums, you should have some level of learning on the instrument to attend. But we do encourage spouse and parents to come and stay with their family members, that's fine.

MD: Have you had any students who have gone on to find big success in building their careers?

EL: JD Beck, who is playing with Anderson Paak, was one of our attendees at our first camp. It's really exciting to see what he has done. He was really young when he attended, and he was focused like a tiger the entire time.

I have seen this camp literally change people's lives. We had to take two years off for COVID, but it's so great to be back. It's fun to create a different team and a new experience every year. I enjoy helping people reinvigorate their love for playing music.

MD: You can't ask for more than that. Who is on the team this year?

EL: Simon Phillips, Kenny Aronoff, Jotan Afandor, Sarah Thawer, Russ Miller, Nate Morton, and a few more to be announced.

MD: You have had some great teachers in the past.

EL: The list of teachers that we have had is amazing: Virgil Donati, Thomas Lang, Stanton Moore, Jeff Hamilton, Tony Royster Jr., Jim Keltner, Chad Wackerman, Aquiles Priester, Matt Garstka, Gergo Borlai, Derek Roddy, Dave Elitch, Chris Coleman has done our camp several times, the list goes on and on. We really try to bring in people that have something a little different to offer. We try to vary the skill sets and ages of the instructors, so there is something for everybody. One of the most exciting things for me is when someone comes to learn from a specific person, and they wind up learning a lot from someone else that they previously didn't know much about.

MD: How many people can attend, is there a cap to the attendance?

EL: Yes, we try and keep it small, this year we can take 35 people. We have a bigger space this year, but everyone has to have enough space to work and learn. People come for the special attention that they receive, and we are very loyal to that, so we have a cap of 35 students.

The 2022 instructors; Kenny Aronoff, Russ Miller, Nate Morton ,Sarah Thawer, Jotan Afandor, Simon Phillips, and a few more to be announced.

MD: Are you doing any concerts or livestreaming events along with the bonanza?
EL: This year we are doing a livestream that is in addition to what the attendees experience. On Saturday and Sunday both Kenny Aronoff and Simon Phillips are going to do a special livestream that will be icing on top of the cake for the attendees, and it will let people around the world tune in to sample, enjoy, and see what the camp is about. Those events will be partly educational and partly entertainment and will be in addition to the Bonanza curriculum.
MD: Is there any set BDB curiculuum?
EL: We ask the attendees what they would like to learn, and then we communicate that to the drummers. We like each teacher to focus on what they are known for, but each of the four days has a focus.

Jeff Hamilton, Stanton Moore and Thomas Lang

Chris Coleman

MD: What have past days focused on?
EL: Focused days can be on different styles, feet vs. hands… Amazingly, we have found that people are really hungry for different practice skills.
MD: Yes, I found in my own teaching that many drummers have to learn *HOW* to practice, not just *WHAT* to practice.
EL: Many of our attendees have learned that they just weren't practicing efficiently. We really encourage our guests to speak up and suggest topics that they would like to learn about.

What it comes down to is this. You can watch as many YouTube videos and watch as many on-line drum schools as you want, that's wonderful. But you can't download the feeling, experience, and inspiration of being in the same room with someone who is amazing at what they do. The moments of personal contact between the instructors and the attendees where someone's grip gets adjusted, or a minor change is made in someone's playing just can't be replicated anywhere else, that is what really sets us apart. You can't download that.
MD: What makes you choose each instructor?
EL: Variety, we also watch the *Modern Drummer* Reader's Poll very closely to see who people are interested in. We are also thrilled to have *Modern Drummer* as a sponsor this year.
MD: What have you learned in your years of producing this camp?
EL: One year, before anyone got here, the instructors all took turns playing the same kit that was set up. I was amazed in how different one drum set can sound with different people playing it. That was surprising! Then a few days later, Dave Elitch had the campers all line up and play the same kit, and he commented to me about the same thing. Every single person had such a different sound on the same kit.

This year I am so excited to have some younger instructors like Sarah and Jotan. Diversity is really an important thing. The demographic of our attendees has really changed in the 10 years

Wunderkid JD Beck playing for Gergo Borlai

Ruth Turner

that we have been doing this. At the beginning it really was male dominated, and mainly ages 35 to 54. But that has changed completely. Every year there are more females attending the camp, we now have parents bringing their kids.

MD: It's really nice to see more women and young girls playing drums these days.

EL: And speaking of diversity, we have had people come to the camp from 28 different countries: Hong Kong, Peru, Japan, Italy, Turkey, Israel. And the range of age of our attendees is amazing too.

It's really rewarding for me when a parent from the UK contacts me to ask about their kids attending, because their kids have never travelled. Then their parents call me during the week to tell me that their child is having the time of their life. I take the trust that parents put in us very seriously. As a host and a producer, those are the most impactful moments for me.

I also love to see the person who isn't really comfortable on day one, and then I see them absolutely tearing it up and living their best life on day four, that makes me feel so wonderful. The community of drummers and drumming has such a positive impact on people's lives. Drumming is for everybody, it's good for your mind, your spirit, and your body. Unfortunately the drumset is usually not part of a public-school music education.

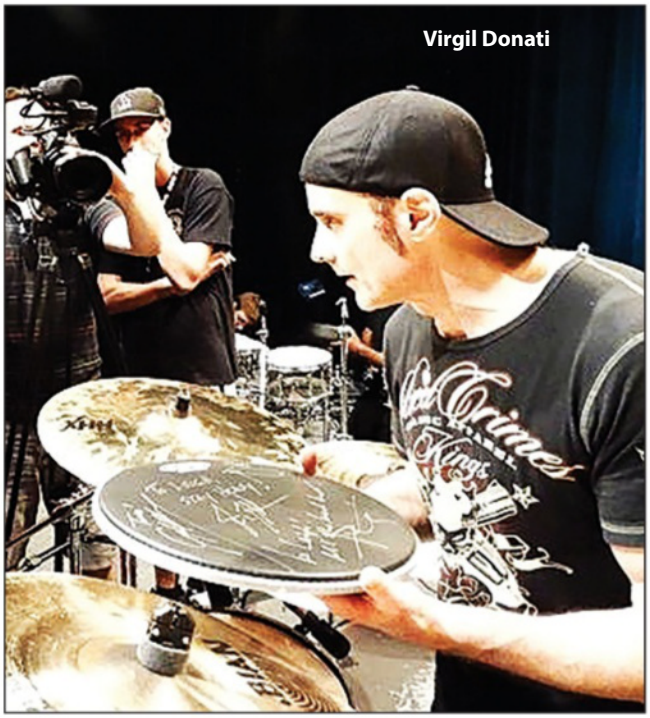
Music education should not be a "nice addition" to education, it is necessary!

MD: I agree, music education should be mandatory.

EL: Music is a language, it is a life skill, it is something that is part of who we are as human beings, it is part of our culture, and with all apologies to the mathematicians out there, we don't get together to celebrate someone's birthday and do trigonometry, we *SING* "Happy Birthday!" Drumming and music are not only an enjoyable activity, they enhance your life.

MD: I believe they are an *essential* component of *enjoyable* life.

EL: And it's even *more enjoyable* when you do it, and learn about it, as part of a group.


Virgil Donati

MD: I always say that if more people played drums, the world would be a much better place. And at *Modern Drummer* we are (also) just trying to improve the world one drummer at a time, that's why *Modern Drummer* is so excited to be sponsoring the bonanza.

Francesco Desmaele

EL: The best thing for us at The Big Drum Bonanza is when a camper leaves and comments about how inspired he (or she) is, and how he has (literally) months (or even years) of new things to practice. To help people create that self-motivation to practice and improve their drumming life is what is really special to me.

MD: It sounds like The Big Drum Bonanza and *Modern Drummer* are really trying to do the exact same thing!

The Business Side of Drumming

By Billy Ashbaugh

For this month's article, I'm going to share some of my personal insights for dealing with the business side of drumming. If you're lucky enough to be making a living playing drums, then you are already aware of the importance of this topic. Bad decisions in business can either make or break your success. Even though we get to do what we love and make money at it, remember this is still a business. For me, there's more to it than simply how much money you're going to make for a gig. Let's get started…

Naijah Ashbaugh

Have you ever had to decide on whether to take a gig that was offered? All professional drummers have had to do this at some point in their career. Making this decision is (of course) a personal choice that *you* must make. Everyone has their own personal circumstances that help them to determine this decision. In the past, I haven't always had the luxury of debating whether to take a gig. Sometimes I simply needed the money and took whatever gig was offered at the time. We've all been there. However, I have (occasionally) been fortunate enough to be able to pick and choose my gigs, and I'd like to share my approach to making those decisions.

I'll admit, in the past I've taken some gigs that I regretted. Whenever this happened, I tried to reflect on what went wrong. Over time, I came up with a "check list" for what I need from a gig before I accept it. These are factors that help me to determine if it's worth my time and energy to take the gig. The goal is to evaluate everything that goes into the gig, and then sit back and look at the "big picture" to see if it's something that benefits me at that time. I always make sure I can "check off" enough areas before I accept the gig.

Whether it's local work or a tour with an artist, my first question is always about the pay. Although this is not the *only* reason to take a gig, it's still the first thing I like to determine. This can be done in a very nice and professional manner. I've had people tell me that they're uncomfortable asking that right away. But for me, it makes perfect sense to address this right up front. After all, I am being hired to provide a service and it's only fair to know what my pay will be. Would you except any job without knowing your salary first? Probably not. If the person hiring me doesn't offer that info right up front, the red flags go up for me. Every time someone was vague or uncertain about the pay, things always turned out bad for me. My best advice is to walk away from the gig if you experience this issue. Anyone with a legitimate gig will have no problem telling you up front how much you're going to make.

The next few questions I have address the amount of time that's required from me for that gig. How far is the gig? This is important for obvious reasons. There's a big difference between driving 30 minutes (one way) to the gig vs. two hours. Not only is your time involved, but you also have to consider wear and tear on your car as well as the cost of gas. I also ask about the length of the gig. Again, there's a difference between a three-hour gig or a six-hour gig. I once took a corporate gig without asking the schedule and we ended up doing a four-and-a-half-hour first set! That was when I started asking the schedule for every gig. Just like with pay, if someone hesitates when answering this question, the red flag goes up for me. Don't get me wrong, I love playing. However, this is a business, so it's important to know how much of your time you'll have to spend at the gig. Speaking of time invested, I also make sure to ask if there are any rehearsals required. You'd be surprised how many times the person offering me work expected me to put in time for rehearsals, often without pay. For this reason, I always make it a point to ask. It's just good to know. The last thing to find out concerning my time invested is the song list. If it's a bunch of material I've never played, then I need to be ready to put the time in to learn the songs. By taking the time to ask these few simple questions, I'm able to better gauge how much time I need to set aside for each gig.

Finally, I ask questions that address my musical comfort level. In other words, how much will I enjoy playing this material. This is usually last on my list. I don't always have the luxury of being this picky, but when I do, I always ask who else is playing on the gig. Hopefully it's musicians I know, and with whom I enjoy playing. I'll also ask about the material (what songs are we playing?) Hopefully it's music I enjoy playing. Again, this subject is not often a determining factor, I look at it as more of a luxury that I get from time to time.

These are the things I look at before I take any local gigs. It's basically my attempt to answer all of the questions about the gig *before* I've done the gig. I try to avoid surprises. Your invested time is very important. So is your pay, but there are a lot of factors to consider. These are all personal choices we each must make. There is no "one" right way to reach this decision. The trick is to find your own proper balance between all of these areas. Often, there are tradeoffs, and you have to sacrifice certain things. However, I've found that by using this approach, I'm able to avoid the gigs that turn out to be a regret.

I have a rather different "check list" for taking a tour. There are some different factors that come into play for touring. Of course, pay is always discussed first. But for touring I need to find out if it's a weekly salary or am I paid per show? Depending on the schedule, this can

really make a difference. If the artist has me on the road for a week but only does two shows, that will probably influence my decision. Determining the length of a tour is also important. Although things do change from time to time, it's great to have an idea of your schedule before you hit the road.

There are several areas that I like to address before I go on tour. I'll ask if there's a per diem. That's a weekly salary allotted for your eating expenses while on the road. Some artists pay per diem, and some don't. Obviously if there's no per diem, then I'll have to use part of my salary for eating expenses. Not a deal breaker, but good to know.

I'll also confirm that all hotels and travel are covered by the artist. While this is normally the case, I have found that not all artists are willing to do this. I'll also confirm if travel days and rehearsals are paid. Sometimes they are, and sometimes they're not.

Another question that comes up is "tour expenses". I try to find out if there's a budget to cover my cost for sticks, heads and replacing cracked cymbals while on the tour. One final thing I like to check on is if I'm going to be using my own drums and cases, or if they will be supplied by a back-line (rental) company. If we're using a back-line company it's no big deal, as long as the gear is in good shape and sounds great. Luckily, that's almost always the scenario. Plus, sometimes it's nice to *not* put the wear and tear on your own gear.

Not all of these factors will make or break my decision to take a tour. These are simply questions that allow me to see exactly what I'm committing to up front. Just like local gigs, tours vary from each other. And just like local gigs, there are tradeoffs and sacrifices that you must make from tour to tour. There's nothing wrong with politely asking any of these questions. It certainly beats surprises once you're on the gig!

Naijah Ashbaugh

The next question often angers a lot of musicians. Should you take a gig for exposure and-or for less money? This subject angers musicians because if you're out there making a living playing music, the last thing you want (or need) is someone coming along and doing your gig for less money or even for free. I get that. However, I also agree that sometimes the pay really isn't always a significant factor to a gig. It really depends on the situation. I'm not saying that you should go out and play for free, but sometimes it's worth losing a little money and time to get a certain gig under your belt. Before you get mad at me, let me share a couple of stories.

Back when a live band was being put together for the first 'NSYNC tour, we were rehearsing in Orlando. Now keep in mind that 'NSYNC wasn't popular yet. In fact, they were only known in Germany at the time. Most of the band was from the Orlando area. However, two of the musicians were from Miami. This meant they had to commute back and forth for rehearsals. Apparently, management did not want to reimburse those players for their expenses for gas and tolls to travel to rehearsals. Both players ended up quitting right before the tour in Germany started. Literally as the guys from 'NSYNC were walking into the studio to join rehearsals, the two Miami players were walking out the door with their gear in hand. Management scrambled to replace them at the last minute, and we went on to do what would be the first of many great tours. This poses the question: Were the musicians right in their decision to walk away from the gig over gas and toll money? Everyone will have their own answer to this question. The only opinion that matters (at that point) is yours. I don't think there's one "set answer" for anyone. It's easy to look back and see what you should have done, but it's much more difficult to make the correct decision "in the moment." Whenever I'm put in this situation, it's tough. I do my best to try and look at every angle to make sure I'm not walking away from a gig I will regret later.

One day I got a phone call from a young drummer that I met while I was out on tour. He had just landed a gig with a big up and coming artist and wanted some business advice. He told me that he was very excited about his new gig, but he also said he was very surprised how they (management) handled the business side of things. He told me that they said that he was responsible for going out and buying and programing a new drum machine and trigger pads for the gig. Basically, he was responsible for getting his "touring rig" together at his own expense. He thought that it seemed odd that he had to pay for the gear instead of them. He asked me what I would do. I instantly shared this story with him. Back in 1992, I got a gig with the artist Snap! My wife actually got the gig a year before, but they (Snap!) decided to take out dual drummers for the next tour and they were calling me to see if I was interested. As we began to prepare for our tour, the same thing happened to us. We were asked to invest some money and time to get our touring rigs together. At the time, my wife and I also felt like my friend who had reached out. We didn't really understand why we had to pay for the gear ourselves, but we made the decision to invest in the gig. As it turned out, we went on to do several years of touring around the world and that exposure is what led to my gig with 'NSYNC. The truth is that artists just don't have the budget to cover all of the expenses. If you're ever faced with this situation, you too will have to make your own decision at that time. It's a very tough call, but sometimes you have to try to look at the big picture when you make these decisions. I'm very thankful that my wife and I made the investment in our gear when we did. I'm sure my friend who reached out feels the same.

One final note. Remember this is a business so you need to treat it accordingly. You're offering (selling) your time and services for hire. Even though we get to do what we love for a living, it's important to stay on top of your game. Make sure your gear is in good condition. Always be on time. Make sure you're always prepared for the gig. Try your best to be a team player and be easy to get along with, don't be that person who causes drama. These are all basic business skills but sometimes we lose sight of that. You have to make yourself worth hiring. A friend of mine once told me, "Job security means being the answer to someone's problem." I couldn't agree more.

I hope you enjoyed this insight into how I approach "the business side of drumming." I realize that my approach may not be right for everyone. We all have our own agenda and priorities. I only hope that by sharing my viewpoints, it will help you to make the best business decisions that you can for your drumming future. Good luck and enjoy the journey!!

Check out Billy's *Modern Drummer* profile page at moderndrummer.com

Accent Options

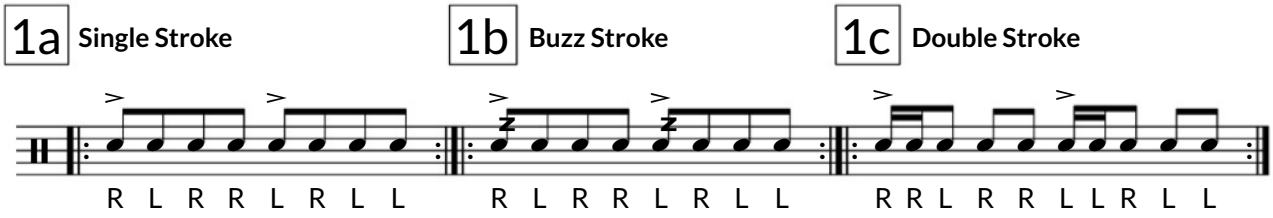
By: Jonathan Barber

Drum Channel and I would like to share something with you that I created called accent options. This is a warmup or rudimental exercise that I like to use. You can take any rudiment that has an accent and apply three different strokes to the accented note. The first one is the single stroke, the second one is a buzz stroke, and the third one is a diddle stroke.

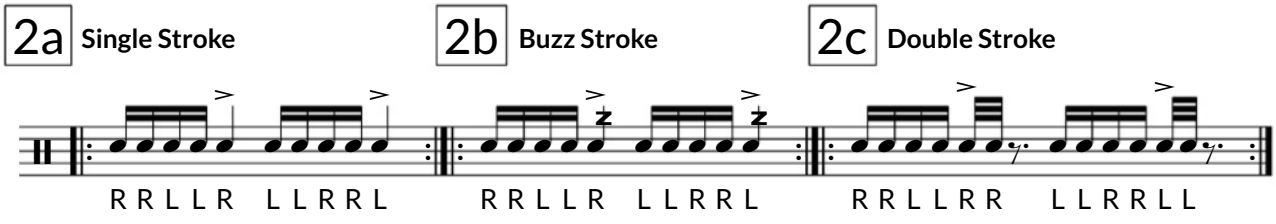
For example, when I play a paradiddle, I'm (naturally) going to be accenting the first stroke of the paradiddle. I could play that accent with a single stroke, or substitute a buzz stroke or a diddle stroke. You could also take the five-stroke roll or a double paradiddle and apply these three accents. It's good to practice these one at a time.

Once you are able to use the accent options with the rudiments, you can explore and apply them to different phrases or patterns that you like to play. Again, take any accent you have and apply the sticking to a single stroke accent, a buzz stroke accent, or a diddle stroke accent. It's going to create different textures, but you're playing the same phrases. It's very cool, enjoy!

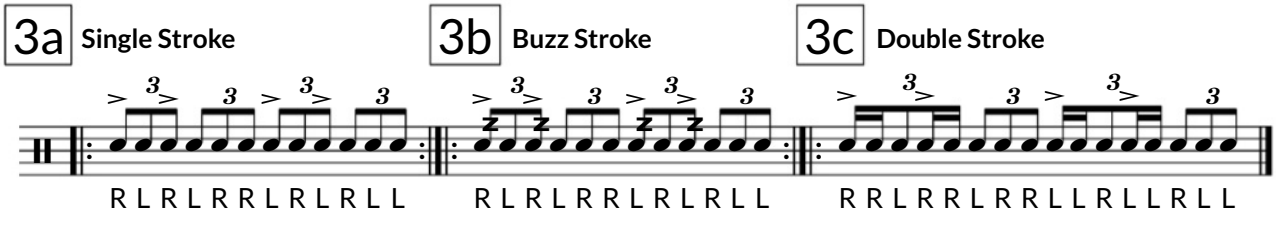
Paradiddle Accent Options



5-Stroke Roll Accent Options



Double Paradiddle Accent Options



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These NFTs will be your key to Modern Drummer's Music, Media & Entertainment ecosystem in Web 3. Our community is growing fast & will reap rewards for all META PASS holders.

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Sound Design Part 2: The Microcosm Effects Pedal

By Tony Verderosa

In Part 2 of this Sound Design Series, we will explore the use of hardware effects pedals as a means of processing drum and percussion sounds. In Part 1 of this series, we focused on computer-based effects plugins used in a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW). Computer based DAW's along with music production software like Logic or Cubase can be steep in terms of price and learning curve. Therefore, in this month's column, we will look at a simpler and more cost-effective alternative.

All the video clips below are recorded on my secondary hybrid drum rig. This setup is intentionally built for speed and simplicity. I want the least amount of "friction" when it comes to creativity. This rig consists of percussion/drums, a Mackie VLZ-4 Mixer, a few microphones, and an iPad.

My goal with this streamlined recording system is to sit down at the kit and immediately capture sounds. Anything that slows down my creative flow is unacceptable. I never power down this iPad or the mixer. It's always ready to record. I spent quality time months ago testing my microphone placement.

I am not concerned with recording separate audio tracks for kick, snare, djembe, or anything with this sound design rig. I record everything as a stereo track. This iPad-based system is an "idea incubator", a creative testing ground to explore new textures, new grooves, and sound sculpting techniques. There is an immediacy to this rig that is really gratifying. Adding a hardware effects pedal such as the Microcosm by Hologram makes it even more fun. In the words of the founders of Hologram, "We hope you find our equipment useful as a tool for both arranged performance and experiments into randomized creativity."

ALT HYBRID DRUM SYSTEM

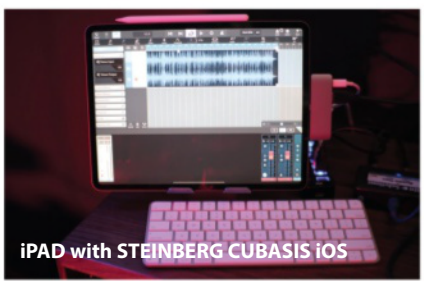
In the photos of my Secondary Alt Hybrid Drum System and the various components you can see the Djembe in the foreground. I have a few gongs, a "boing sheet" from Creative Percussion, a 17" Sabian crash, a Sabian VFX crash, a 12" snare, an LP trash snare, a weird metal device that looks like a "star", an 18" kick drum and one roto-tom. Note, I am intentionally NOT mentioning the electronic drum pad, the micro-freak synth, the Korg monologue synth and the DTX midi trigger module. These devices are not being used in any of the music and video produced in this month's column. I will cover those items in a future article. In this month's column, I am only recording acoustic percussion/drums into a special hardware effects pedal.

ALT HYBRID DRUM SYSTEM

MACKIE MIXER

The Mackie Mixer has great sounding preamps and offers me flexibility for incorporating multiple external effects pedals. My iPad is pictured with a USB hub so the iPad can communicate with my Steinberg USB interface. The USB hub enables me to capture the analog sounds coming from the Mackie Mixer into the iPad via the UR44 audio interface.

MACKIE MIXER



iPAD with STEINBERG CUBASIS iOS

STEINBERG UR44 AUDIO INTERFACE

With the Steinberg UR44 USB Audio Interface, I am connecting the stereo left and right out the Mackie Mixer directly into the Microcosm Pedal. I connect the left and right output from the Microcosm into the UR44 which then converts the sounds digitally into my iPad for recording and additional sound design treatments. I also added a small Bluetooth keyboard which can speed up the work flow. The Microcosm effects pedal. I am routing the stereo left and right output of the Mackie Mixer directly into this pedal. The Microcosm is a powerful sound design tool. It is a granular effects pedal and looper combined. The left and right output of this pedal goes directly into the Steinberg UR44 for

STEINBERG UR44 AUDIO INTERFACE

MICROCOSM BY HOLOGRAM ELECTRONICS

recording processed loops and individual samples. We will focus on the Microcosm in this article because it is such a fantastic sound design tool.

WHY DOES SOUND DESIGN MATTER?

Let's put these sounds into context. Why would I want to put all my drums and percussion through a pedal like the Microcosm? For me, it's about offering up something unique and pursuing sounds that I have not heard before. That's my goal as a composer and that's also my goal as a drummer/percussionist.

If I am approaching an artist like Joe Satriani with new ideas for collaboration or remixing, I want to offer him a sound and musical perspective he won't find anywhere else. When he hears one of my tracks or drum grooves, it must be compelling enough for him to say, "yes - that's different. I haven't produced any songs yet with that type of drum sound.".

My motivation is the same in the world of TV and Film. Developing new sounds and textures with a pedal like Microcosm will help me compose music that feels inspired and fresh. The ritual of sound design can also have a Zen-like/meditative quality. You get to follow your bliss and take the journey down that rabbit hole to discover unusual sounds. I am still playing drums and bringing years of practice and dedication to the table, but these new tools allow me to process my instruments in unpredictable ways.

WHAT IS THE MICROCOSM?

The Microcosm rearranges and re-animates everything that I play into it. It is a granular sampling, delay, and looping pedal. The Microcosm is also known as a "Guitar Stomp Box" because it often sits on the floor. You can radically alter the sound of your instrument by "stomping" on one of the buttons with your foot. I can use the tap tempo feature to establish a fixed bpm for the effects to sync to. Some of the effects include cascading micro loops, tempo synced rhythms, diffused ambient soundscapes, hypnotic drones and much more.

The pedal has 11 unusual effects built in with a total of 44 preset variations. The microcosm allows me to stretch, slice, rearrange and manipulate drum and percussion sounds in some exciting ways. It also allows for additional sound design features by giving me access to pitch modulation, a low pass filter and 4 different reverb effects. The built-in phrase looper function is also amazing and requires its own article and set of videos to explore the many creative possibilities.

The stereo phrase looper allows for recording up to 60 seconds of your performance and then you can record unlimited overdubs on top of your primary loop. There is even a "Hold Sampler" for recording short bursts of your phrasing. I can reverse the playback of the samples and loops and I can also playback the loops at various speeds.

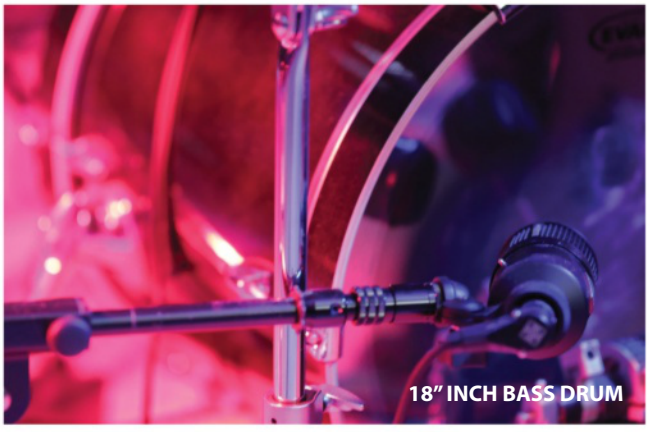
The **first video clip** demonstrates feeding just an acoustic bass drum through the Microcosm via the Mackie Mixer. I am using the FILTER knob to adjust the low pass filter and I have also applied the SPACE knob to add some dramatic reverb to the sound. You will also notice on the left side there is a knob called TIME which will establish the various subdivisions of each hit. I have set this TIME knob to "8X" to produce a very busy cascading effect of multiple bass drums. The blinking light is indicating the

STAR PERCUSSION DEVICE

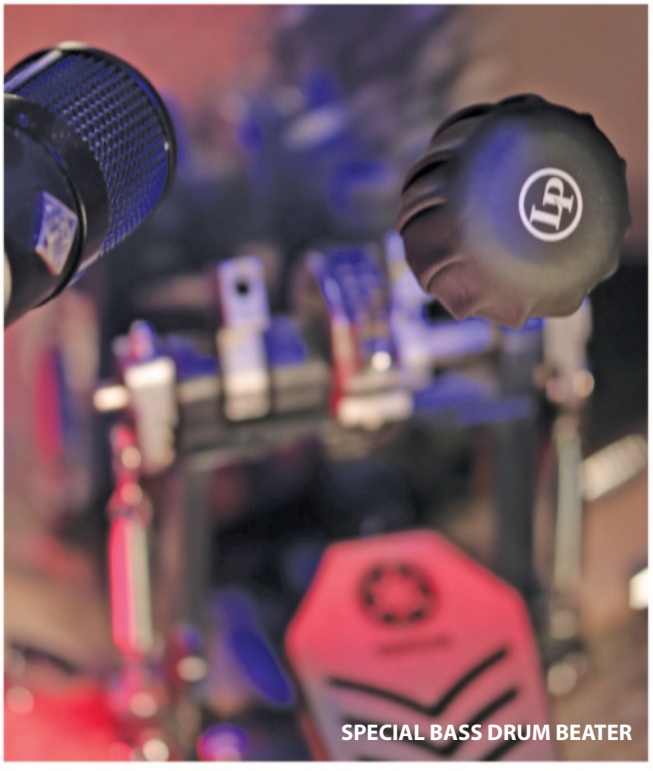
LP TRASH CAN SNARE

BPM based on a quarter note pulse. The effect I am getting from the TIME KNOB set to 8X is a very intentional GLITCH sound, like a burst of 32nd note triplets or 64th notes every time I stomp on my bass drum.

The low pass filter and SPACE effect makes the kick drum sound even more ominous. At the very tail end of this video clip, I hit the snare drum to find out how the same effect might work on a snare. This video clip is a good example of "going down that rabbit hole". I am experimenting with this pedal and adjusting parameters to arrive at new sounds. All of this was recorded into my iPad. That strange bass drum sound could become the basis of a new film cue. With my workflow, I immediately upload all new recordings and samples into my drobox via the iPad. I can come back to that loop next week or next month to use it in a virtual sampler on my computer or import this sound into a Roland SPD-SX sampling Multi-Pad device.


18" INCH BASS DRUM

TELEFUNKEN M82 KICK DRUM MIC


SPECIAL BASS DRUM BEATER

This first beat I recorded into the iPad using the Microcosm effect is called "BLOCKS". Using this effect, incoming audio will trigger glitches or random bursts of notes. Adjusting the "Activity knob" controls the amount of variation and sample manipulation applied to the sound source. There are 4 preset slots, and each preset gets more complex. In the groove example on the video, I am applying EFFECT PRESET D.

BLOCKS EFFECTS PRESETS

Presets A, B, C and D are described as follows:

A. Rearranges your playing and adds bursts of sequenced runs of recent notes

B. Rearranges and pitch-shifts incoming signal

C. Filtered samples overlap and fade out resulting in a softer, less angular glitch sound

D. Rearranges the incoming signal using pitch-shifts and bit-crushing

The next groove variation on groove A1 is recorded using the Microcosm effect called "BLOCKS". I am hitting the drums a bit harder and accenting some of the gongs with a louder hit to see how the Microcosm pedal reacts. You can definitely hear the Microcosm applying aggressive random pitch shifting to the burst of snare hits and gong hits.

You can see at the very beginning of this video I am still "learning" what the pedal is capable of by experimenting with some light hits on the roto-tom and Latin percussion. This video clip is a bit longer since I am becoming more comfortable locking into the pulse and random weirdness of this "Blocks" effect. Softer hits on the snare and djembe produce some really nice results. I will easily

GONGS + NEUMANN KM 184 MIC

develop this groove into its own song and/or film cue.

At the start of the video clip, I am adjusting the reverb "SPACE" knob. I am playing a light cross stick backbeat. What I discovered is that the burst of glitching/pitch shifted notes are activated by louder velocities. You can hear some of the softer bass drum strikes don't produce that crazy burst of bass drum glitches. The reverb I added feels nice. This would definitely make an excellent ambient electronic track with a few synths added on top of this groove.

In **this video clip,** I am experimenting with the TIME KNOB to change up the Subdivisions on this "blocks" effect. I was able to cycle through some 1/8th note repeating effects and finally settled on a 16th note subdivision. It takes some getting used to playing with these new effects. As you can see in this video, I am a little hesitant trying out this new funk groove. I am experimenting and trying to figure out what will work well with this new microcosm effects setting.

This is a "Four on the Floor" house music groove where I get to explore the 16th note subdivisions on the TIME knob. I played lots of accents on the gongs, djembe and snares.

BOING SHEET + DJEMBE

TUNNEL EFFECTS PRESET

Microcosm Tunnel effects provides cyclical micro-loops that generate hypnotic drones with unique modifiers. Adjusting the ACTIVITY KNOB determines the depth of each modifier.

TUNNEL Pre-sets A, B, C and D are described as follows:

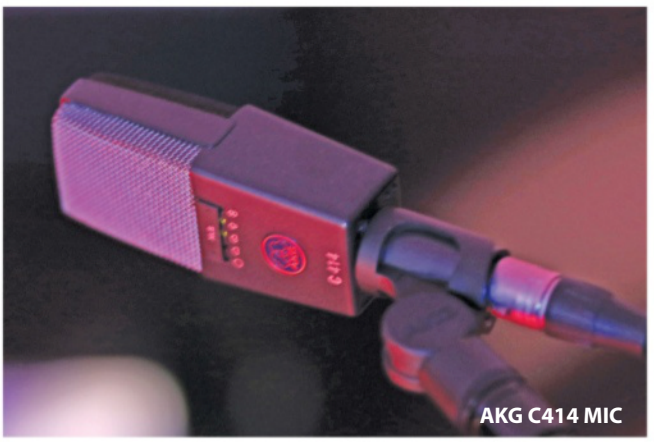
A. Drone sample length compresses and lengthens

B. Sub-octave drone with filter sweeps

C. Drone samples have resonant bandpass filters

D. Envelope-triggered compressing and lengthening of drone sample length

SABIAN HHX Thin Complex Crash


AKG C414 MIC

This last video example is called Microcosm Time Stretch "Tunnell" I used preset variation D and customized it a bit with the envelope shape. The time stretch on this effect is applied to the drone sample which you can clearly hear repeating and locked to the TEMPO. This one was tricky to play along with because it hard to hear the tempo in the pulsing, repetitive drone. I also added a healthy amount of reverb to this groove. It's also worth noting that any time you arrive at a customized version of a preset, you can save it in one of the 16 user slots that are available. This makes it possible to revisit the exact same settings anytime you need them at the push of a button.

I hope you enjoyed this up-close look at the Microcosm pedal by Hologram Electronics. The sound design capability of the Microcosm is innovative and expansive. I could easily do a separate article and series of videos on the Microcosm to demonstrate how it transforms synth sounds. I also have many more effects pedals to explore in future articles. If you have any questions, please visit me, and send comments/feedback via my website, **www.tonyverderosa.com** or follow me on social media. For more information on the Microcosm FX Pedal, please visit the Hologram Electronics website. **https://www.hologramelectronics.com/about**

Check out Tony's *Modern Drummer* profile page at moderndrummer.com

Joe Morello: Master Studies

George Lawrence Stone was a legendary drum teacher and musician, one of his prize pupils was Joe Morello. Joe carried on Stone's valuable teachings and added his valuable insights in his books *Master Studies* and *Master Studies II*. This month, *Modern Drummer* will start offering some of Joe Morello's most valuable teaching concepts and wisdom from those books, beginning with an outstanding endurance exercise called The Stone "Killer" from *Master Studies*.

Today, the legendary Joe Morello also has many prize pupils involved in drumming. Many of them are carrying the drumming torch of George Lawrence Stone and Joe Morello in their own teachings. Some of them are even *adding* to the tradition of Stone and Morello with their own concepts and interpretations. *Modern Drummer* encourages you to seek out one of Joe's gifted students who is teaching today, when you are working on Joe's drumming and musical concepts and exercises.

The Stone "Killer"

George Lawrence Stone wrote this out for me one day and jokingly said, "This is a killer." I found it to be tremendous for endurance. Originally, he only wrote out the first four lines of this. I then expanded on it by adding accents and applying the same idea to triplets and duples. The idea, as Stone explained it, was to work each hand individually before you put them together. (Billy Gladstone used this same concept of developing each hand individually.)

These exercises are not meant to be practiced all at once. They are grouped into sections. First, start with the eighth note section: the 4s, 8s, 12s, and 16s. Play the 4s fifty times each (counting the right hand.) Then do the 8s fifty times, the 12s fifty times, and the 16s fifty times. The first time you try this, you may not be able to do that many repetitions. If necessary, start by doing each line only 10 times. Gradually work your way up to where you can do fifty repetitions. It may take several weeks; that's OK. Work at your own pace, depending on your stage of development. But remember: **Stay relaxed throughout the entire exercise. The key to speed and endurance is relaxation.** Do not allow yourself to tense up in an attempt to play faster or longer. As soon as you become tense, you are defeating the purpose of the exercise.

After you have reached a certain proficiency with the first section, go to the section with the accents on the first note of each group. Practice this the same way as the first section- gradually working your way up to more repetitions. At this point, it would be good to continue practicing the first section in addition to the second section.

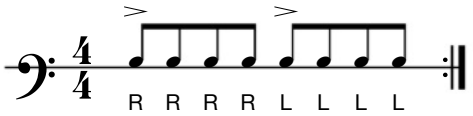
After reaching a proficiency with the second section, move to the third section- accents on the last note of each group. At this point, you might stop working on the first section and concentrate only on the two sections with accents.

Once you have worked your way through all six sections of part one that we are including this month, you can move on to the triplet exercises, and then the duple exercises. We will cover them in coming months. Have fun and remember to **stay relaxed.**

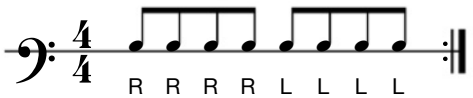
The Stone "Killer" Part One

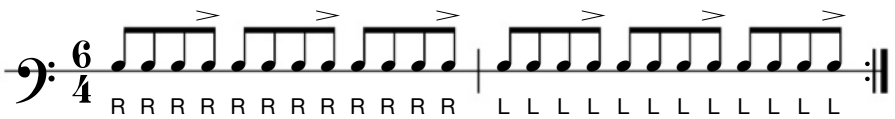
Section 1

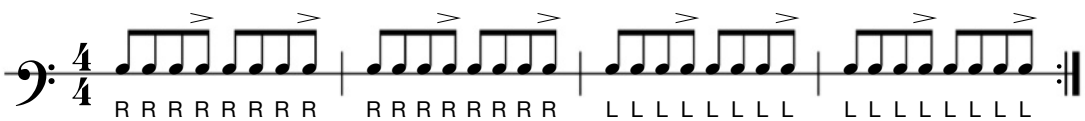
Section 2



Section 3



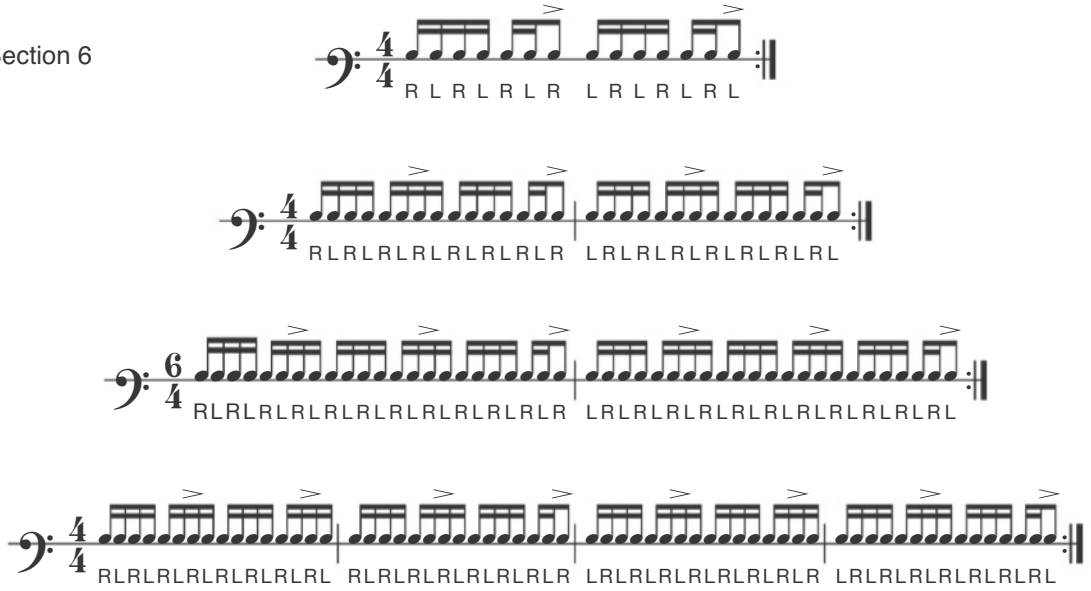




Section 4

Section 5

Section 6



Check out Joe's *Modern Drummer* profile page and get your copy of *Master Studies* at moderndrummer.com

MODERN DRUMMER® CLUB

Since 1977, Modern Drummer has been the world's foremost community builder and a cutting-edge influence on all things related to drums & drumming. A place where young drummers find and follow their drum heroes, gear manufacturers, educators & retailers while actively participating in the drumming community to share their knowledge.

To grace the pages of Modern Drummer Magazine is a coveted achievement that even the most iconic musicians hold in highest regard. Modern Drummer is the heartbeat and center of the drumming community.

Now Modern Drummer is expanding our community for drummers, fans, beat-makers, music creators, NFT collectors, and yes, even gamers!

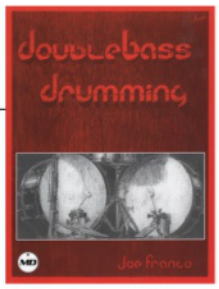
It's called the **Modern Drummer Club** (MDC) and begins with our Discord at https://discord.gg/drums. The MDC Discord channel is a place to talk drums, learn & collaborate with others, share ideas, and provide musical feedback.

The club represents Modern Drummer's foray into Web3 with a membership token that enables members to participate and be privy to the latest Modern Drummer **NFT** drops, contests, games, meet & greets, and rare live drum experiences.

To learn more and join the conversation, join the Discord and follow us on Twitter at https://twitter.com/drumsnft

Double Bass Drumming

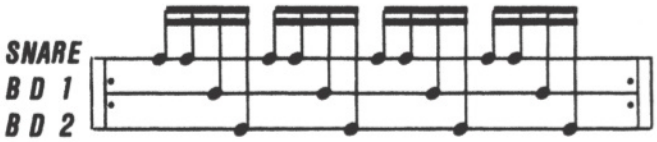
by Joe Franco



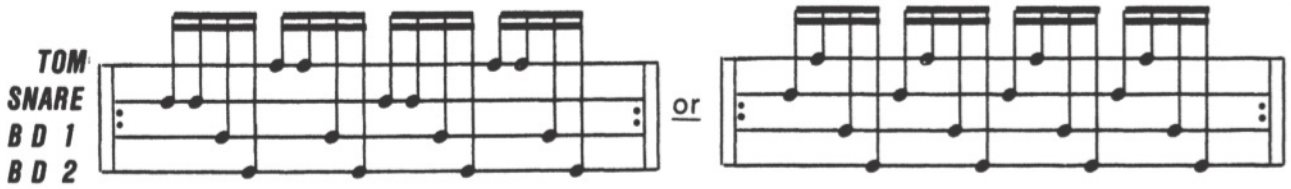
This month we will continue with a section from Joe Franco's groundbreaking book, *Double Bass Drumming*. This month *Modern Drummer* are including Joe's explanation of double bass fills using his Single Stroke System, and include several of Joe's fantastic sounding double bass fills from the book.

Double Bass Fills

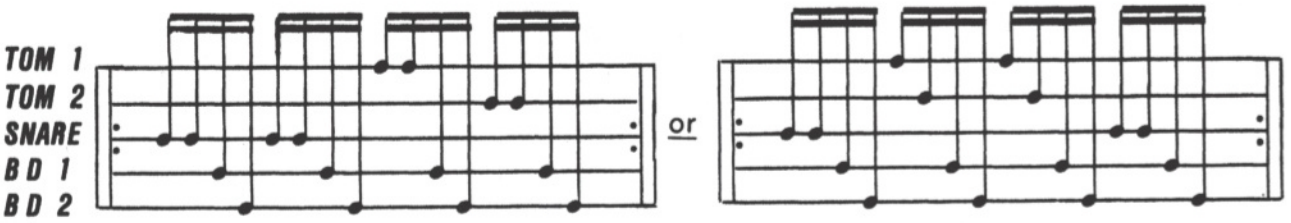
Double Bass Fills patterns are broken up systematically between both hands and both feet. These patterns can be used as one bar fills. They can also be repeated or combined with each other to form extended fills and solos. This section of the book deals with sixteenth notes, later we will deal with eighth note triplets. The top line of each pattern will be labeled HANDS and can be played on different drums. For example, in the following pattern the HANDS are played on the SNARE.



The HANDS can also be broken up between the SNARE and TOM. For example, the same pattern can be played as:



or on two TOMS as:



Try playing these patterns in other ways depending on the different drums in your kit. Every fill pattern is paired with its mirror image in which the feet play the part of the hands and vice versa. For example, the above pattern will be paired as follows.

Practice playing these fills together with a beat similar to those suggested in each section. For example, play phrases such as:

Three bars of a beat, and a one bar of a fill.

One bar of a beat, and one bar of a fill.

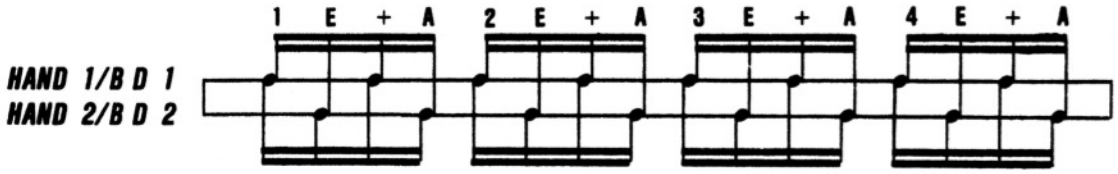
Two bars of a beat, two bars of a fill.

Or…

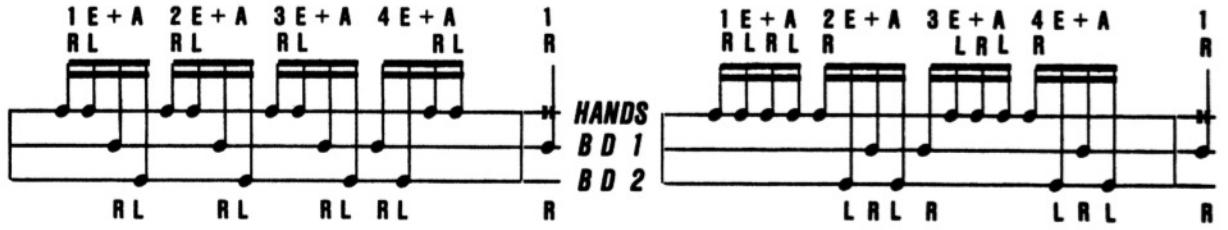
Play a one bar fill two times, or combine two different one bar fills. Once you are familiar with these patterns, try combining them as extended fills or solos of 4, 8, 16 or more measures.

Sixteenth Note Fills

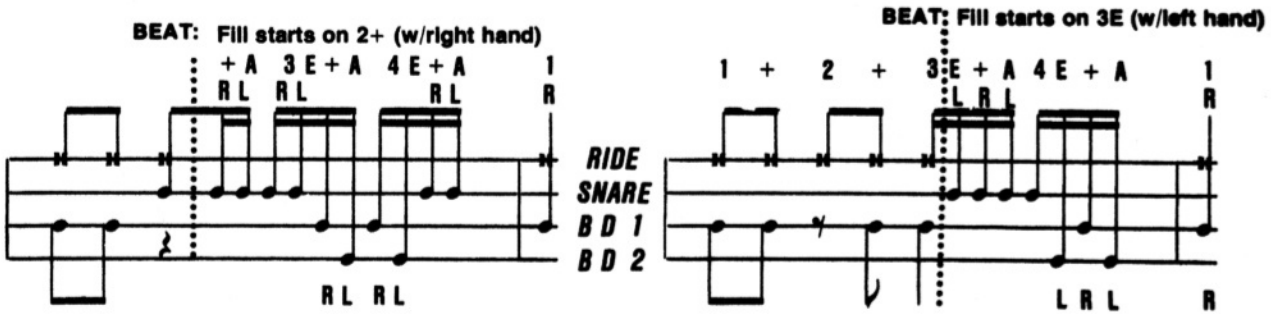
In this section, fills are formed by breaking up continuous sixteenth notes between both hands and both feet. When playing these fills, use the Single Stroke System for both your hands and feet. That is, start with your lead hand or foot and then alternate strokes. In the following illustration, HAND 1 refers to the lead hand, and HAND 2 to the other. Here is the key to playing these fills:



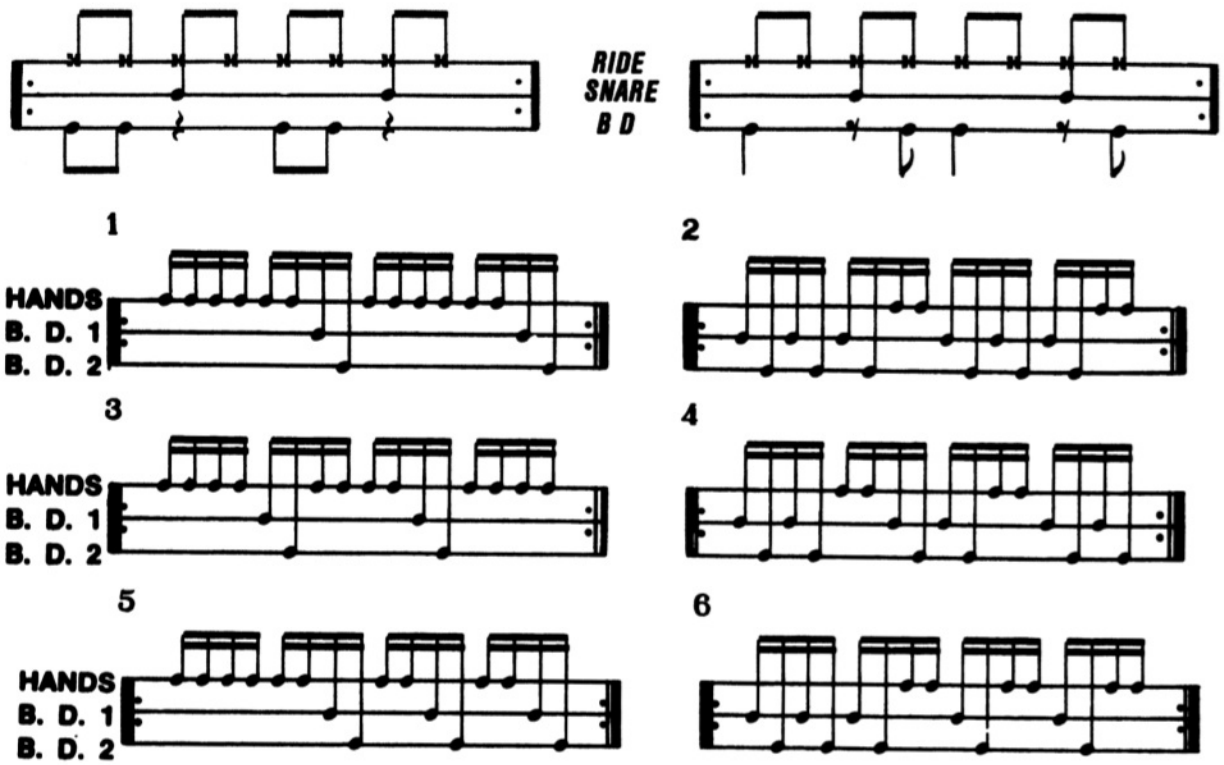
By using this system your lead hand and foot will fall on the 1 of the measure following the fill. For example, for a right-handed player:

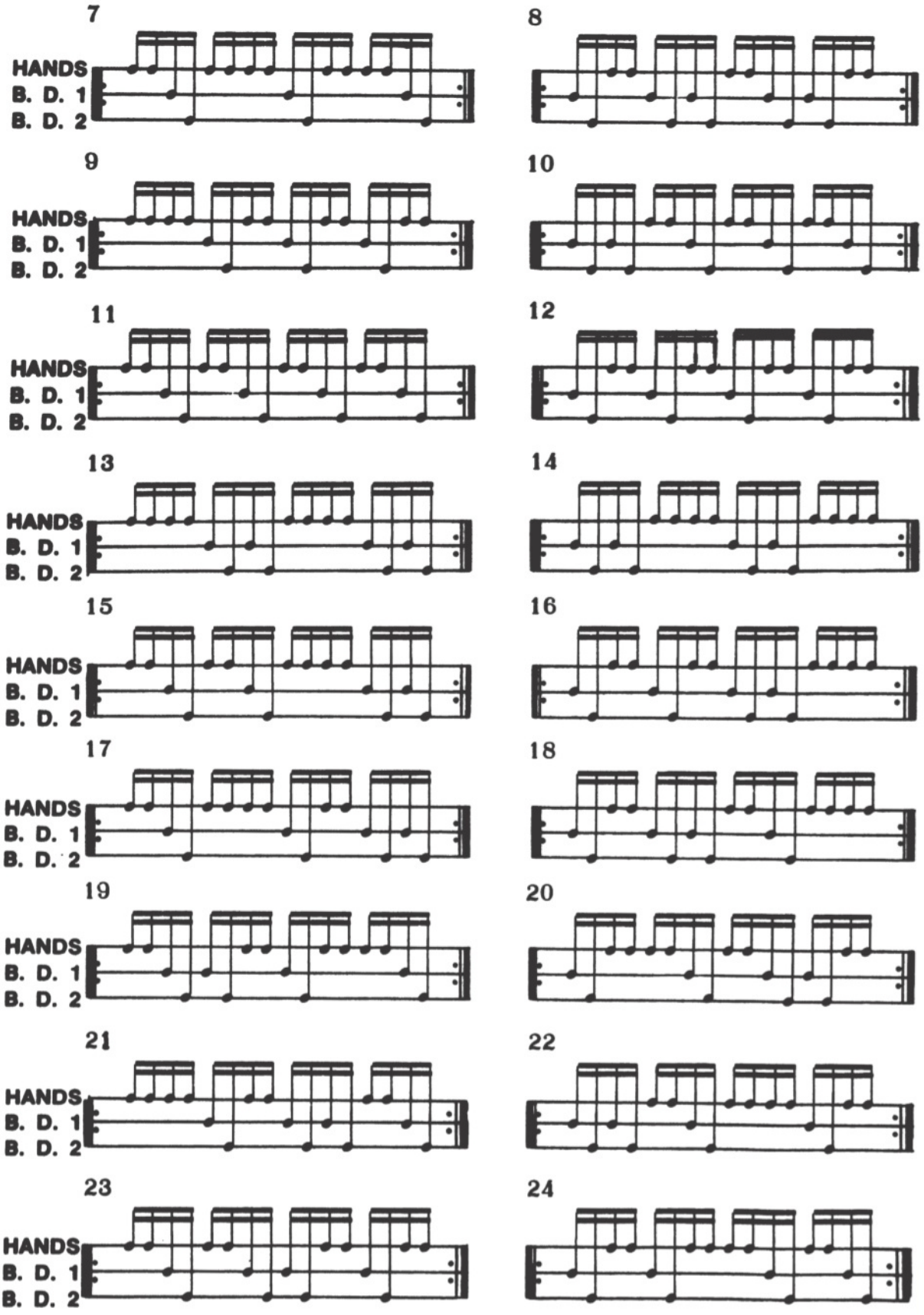


In both cases the quarter note (beat 1) will be on the right hand and foot after the fill.
Although every fill in the following exercises is one bar long and starts on the downbeat of 1, this system can be used regardless of the length of a fill or where it starts. The following examples illustrate fills that start in different places of the measure:



Practice playing these fills with a beat similar to this:





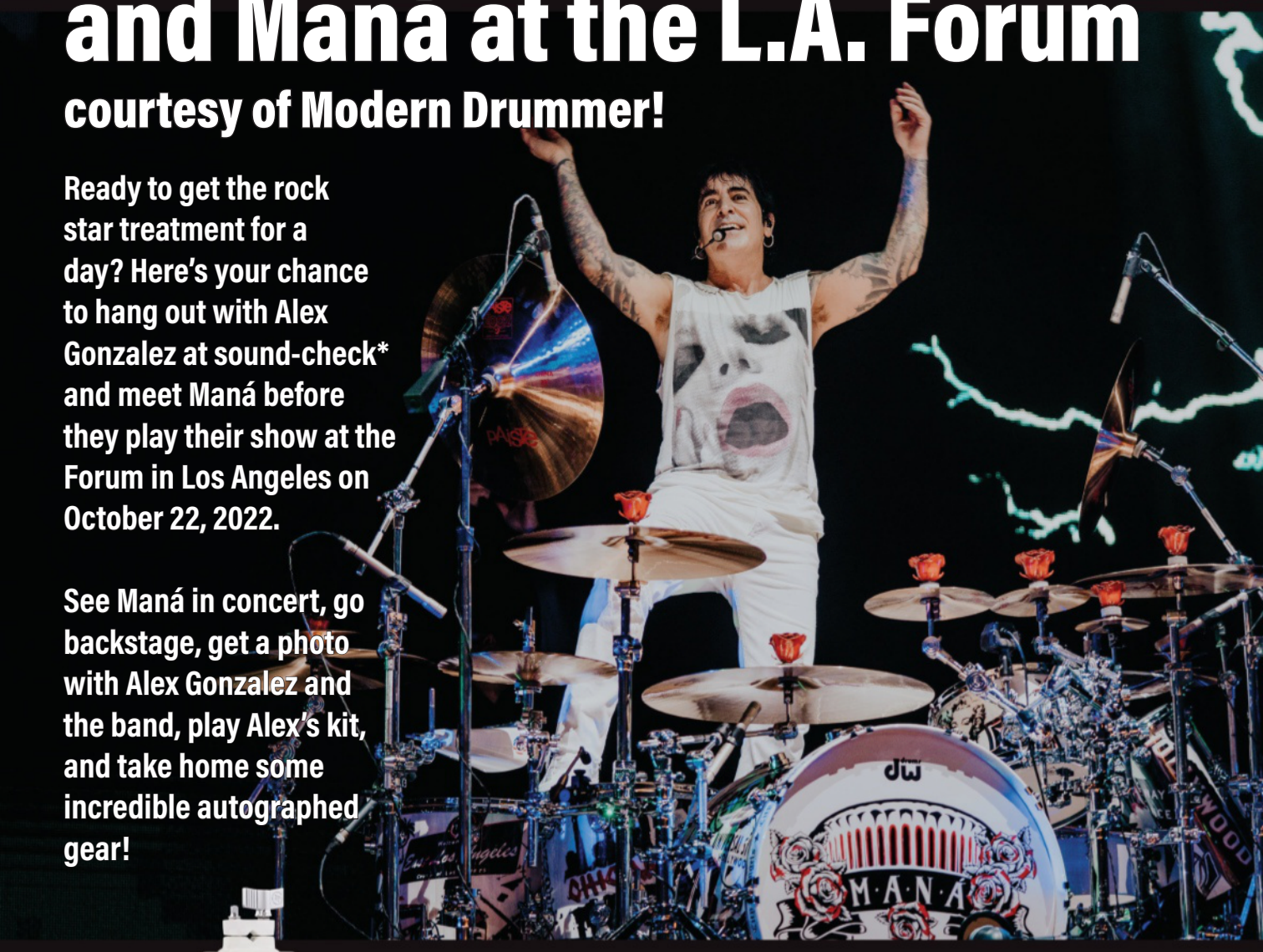
Check out Joe's *Modern Drummer* profile page and get your copy of *Double Bass Drumming* at moderndrummer.com

GIVE THE DRUMMER SOME VIP

Modern Drummer

Meet Alex Gonzalez and Maná at the L.A. Forum

courtesy of Modern Drummer!



Ready to get the rock star treatment for a day? Here's your chance to hang out with Alex Gonzalez at sound-check* and meet Maná before they play their show at the Forum in Los Angeles on October 22, 2022.

See Maná in concert, go backstage, get a photo with Alex Gonzalez and the band, play Alex's kit, and take home some incredible autographed gear!

This Modern Drummer sponsored prize package also includes a LP Alex Gonzalez Maná Cowbell, some Vic Firth drumsticks, and a Remo drumhead.

About the Contest

Modern Drummer and Alex Gonzalez are teaming up to give one current MD subscriber and guest admission to the venue and backstage VIP access to Maná's October 22 show at the Forum in Los Angeles, California. Contest entry dates September 1- October 5, 2022

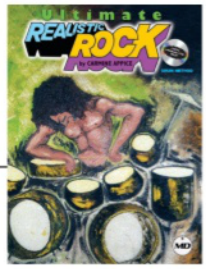
For more about Maná, visit www.mana.com.mx

To enter the contest, visit

www.moderndrummer.com/VIP

*As long as the band has a soundcheck that day, you'll attend and have the chance to play his kit.

Realistic 9/8 Time



Continuing *Modern Drummer's* celebration of the 50th anniversary of Carmine Appice's *Ultimate Realistic Rock* book, this month we present one of the bonus sections that was included in *Ultimate Realistic Rock*, and not included in the original text of *Realistic Rock*. Last month Carmine walked us through how to play in 7/8 and presented us with a bunch of rockin' 7/8 grooves. This month he'll do the same in 9/8. Carmine makes playing in odd times as easy as playing in 4/4. With his help, odd time signatures are no longer a challenge.

Realistic Rock 9/8 Timing

Last month we talked about playing in 7/8, now that you have finished the 7/8 exercises, it is time to add the two eighth notes we talked about and have some fun with 9/8. In 9/8, just like 7/8, the eighth notes are counted as one beat. There are nine eighth notes to a bar. The count is **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, sev (7,) 8, 9.** Remember saying **SEV** instead of seven makes it easier to count so that all the counts are one syllable.

Once again, keep counting out loud so that the time becomes automatic and you can feel each downbeat naturally! Count this over and over... **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, sev (7,) 8, 9, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, sev (7,) 8, 9,** etc.

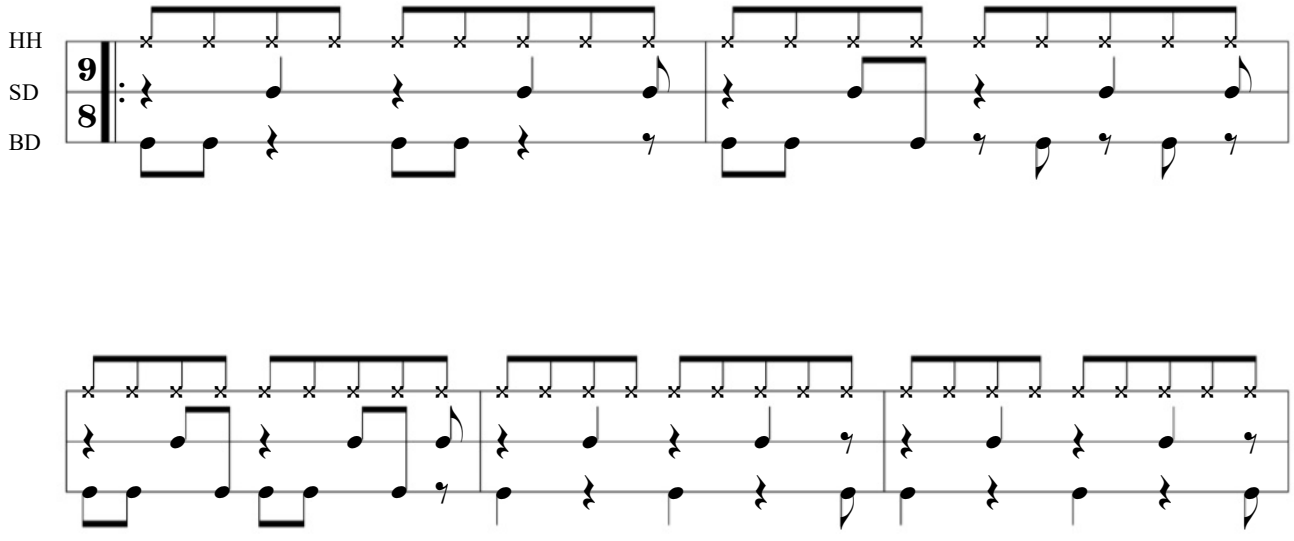
With each count, remember to play your bass drum on the count of one (downbeat) in order to feel comfortable with 9/8, just like the way we practiced in the 7/8 section.

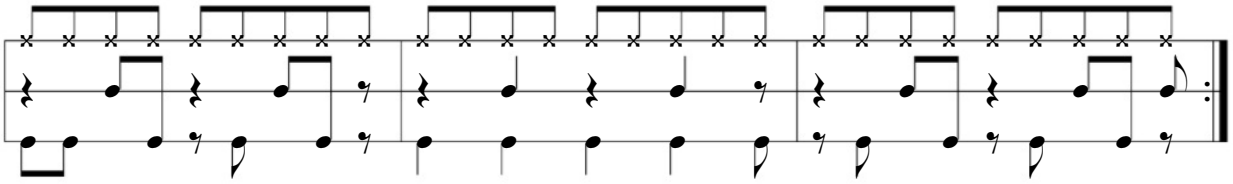
Once again, the eighth note gets a full beat and the sixteenth note gets half a beat. You should have the idea by now. If not, go back to last month's 7/8 text and review.

Another way to think is that 9/8 is the same as playing one bar of 4/4, except now you add one more eighth note and count **1 &, 2 &, 3 &, 4 &, 5.** The count stops on the 5th beat... **There is no & of 5!** The count starts over again after 5 and then goes immediately back to 1.

Go for it... Good luck!

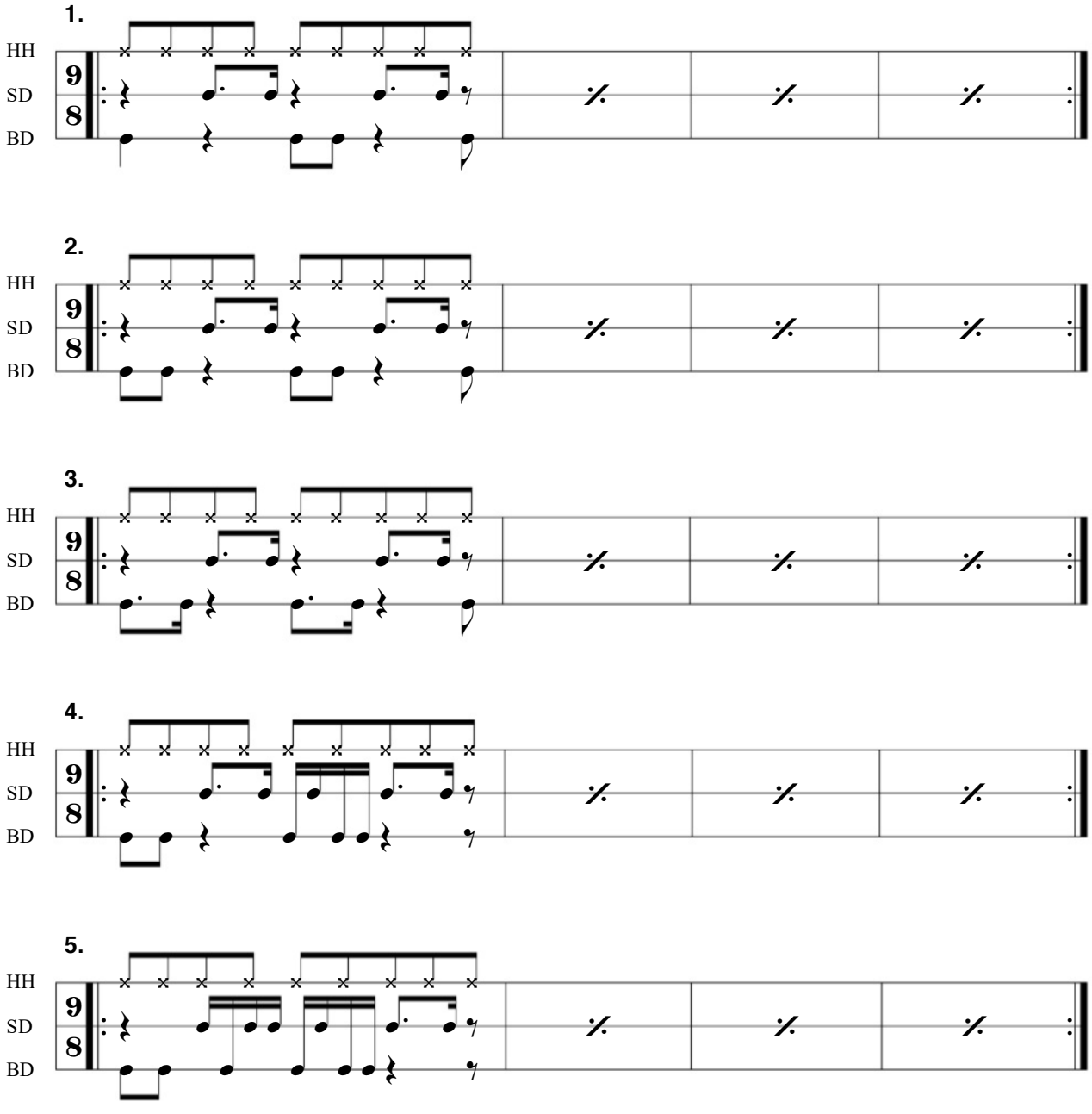
Eight-Bar Exercise





Note: Bars seven and eight imply a 4/4 time signature in the bass drum while playing in 9/8.

Realistic 9/8 Time—Sixteenth Notes



Eight-Bar Exercise

Check out Carmine's *Modern Drummer* profile page and his book collection at moderndrummer.com

1928 Ludwig Black Beauty Moose Drum Trap Set

By Tim Northup

Let's take a trip back in time to the year 1928, the early jazz age. Drummer Jack "Peacock" Kelly, of Chicago's Mark Fisher Orchestra, is one of the world's highest paid drummers. Jack is featured on the cover of the 1928 Ludwig Catalog playing a trap kit with an oil painted Moose bass drum head similar to this month's set. This happens to be my favorite factory painted head in the collection here at the Northup Drums Museum. This trap set features many of the very rare items that are all shown on Jack's set in the 1928 catalog. Let's take a closer look at what we see on this set.

The Bass drum is 14x28 Black Lacquer with De Luxe gold hardware. The snare drum is a Ludwig 5x14 engraved Black Beauty with De Luxe gold hardware. The (very rare) Ludwig Console Trap Table holds a variety of instruments. We see a set of 3 Ludwig Soloblox (Ludwig's very rare version of temple blocks,) two Chinese toms and a 15" Chinese gong. The "tree" of cymbals includes a sizzle cymbal, a Chinese cymbal, and a Zildjian splash. The cymbals are completed with bock-a-da-bock hand cymbals and a Ludwig "Charleston" snowshoe pedal. The traps include a fan of tuned cowbells, a ratchet, wood blocks, several sound effects, a train whistle, cyclone whistle, and a cuckoo whistle.

This would have been an above standard professional drum kit for a working drummer that was playing in orchestras, vaudeville, and theaters for silent films in the 1920-30s. If you would like to experience this set in person, and even play it! Visit the Northup Drums Museum. We are open by appointment 607-434-4769. **www.northupdrums.com**

Jack "Peacock" Kelly
Former strutting "Peacock" drum major of Sousa's Great Lakes Band. Now considered the World's highest paid drummer. Playing with Mark Fisher and His Orchestra, Chicago.

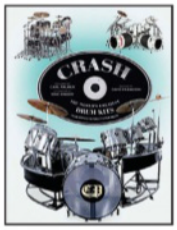
Ludwig Trap Table and Holder
WITH the multiplicity of traps and cymbal effects now in use by the drummer it is necessary to use a combination of stand and holder that makes them all available. Not only a holder but a neat and attractive layout that helps "flash" the entire drum outfit.
You can see from the picture that it permits you to mount every popular device and effect you will need in modern drumming. Everything has a place, and is easy to reach.
The Ludwig Console Trap Table is a solid and substantial stand. It's strong, too, never a chance to wiggle or wabble.
Folds compactly in case you wish to move or transport the stand. It is folding and collapsible. Metal parts are nickel plated so that it is clean and bright for show purposes.
Adjustable for height.
The traps shown are not included with the stand.
The Ludwig Trap Table can be had with or without the two Tom-tom rings. These rings are made for the standard size 10" and 12" Tom-toms.
No. 1005
Wright, only 19 lbs.

Ginger Baker's Drum Workshop Collector's Series 2015 Rock and Roll Fantasy Camp Kit

In 2015 Ginger Baker took part in that year's edition of the Rock and Roll Fantasy Camp, where campers are mentored by legendary rock musicians- with whom they get to perform at the end of the camp. Citing the pain of arthritis at his then age of 76, Ginger stated that it would be his last performance on a drum kit.

The kit shown here is the one that Ginger played at the Rock and Roll Fantasy Camp. It's a Drum Workshop Collector's Series kit with an Ivory/Ebony exotic wood finish. It includes 8x10 and 10x14 rack toms; 11x14 and 13x16 suspended floor toms; 14x20 and 14x22 bass drums; and a 6 ½x14 Edge snare drum combining wood and metal shell sections.

The custom kit made for Ginger to play at the Rock and Roll Fantasy Camp is as unique as Ginger was himself. Shallow bass drums in two different sizes, extremely flat positioned rack toms, and a one-of-a-kind Ivory/Ebony exotic wood finish. In another unusual move, both rack toms are above the right bass drum, rather than centered between the bass drums.



This kit is featured in the book *Crash: The World's Greatest Drum Kits*, available at ***moderndrummer.com***

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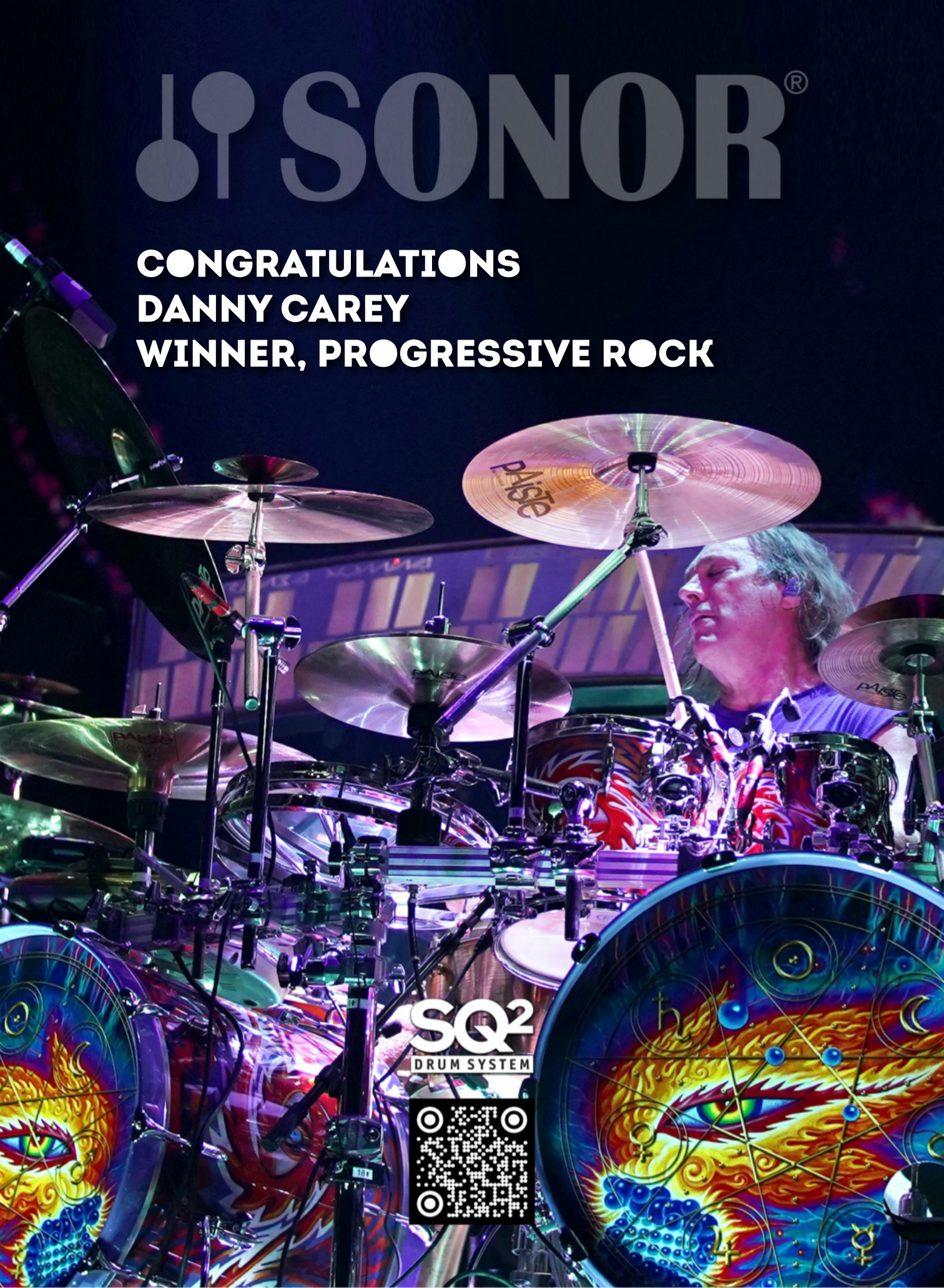
CONTEST WINNERS MUST BE 21 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER. OPEN ENTRIES AUGUST 1 TO SEPTEMBER 15, 2022.
WINNER TO BE CONTACTED SEPTEMBER 25, 2022. FULL LINE UP AND CRUISE DETAILS AT THEKISSKRUISE.COM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